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PHILIP DARRELL.

VOL. II.

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PHILIP DARRELL.

A Romance of English Home Life.

BY

ALBERT E. ROWCROFT.

God comes with leaden feet, but strikes with iron hands.
OLD PROVERB.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. II.

LONDON:
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 8, CATHERINE ST., STRAND.
1875.

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JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS

823

R 78p

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PHILIP DARRELL.



CHAPTER I.

PHILIP IS PUZZLED AS TO WHAT HE SHOULD DO FOR KATIE WRIGHT—A VISIT FROM MR ALLERTON—TOM IN DIFFICULTIES—MR ALLERTON FEELS HONOURED BY AN INTRODUCTION TO DR RENHARD—A CONVERSATION WHEREIN SUNDRY GORDIAN KNOTS WHICH PHILIP COULD NOT UNTIE ARE CUT BY A MODERN ALEXANDRIAN SWORD MUCH TO THE ALEXANDER'S SATISFACTION.

A FEW days passed quietly by, Philip all the time turning over in his mind the many projects he had formed for Kate, without being able to come to any definite conclusion as to any of them.

Life is so full of perplexing problems, vast and mysterious, and the powers man brings to their solution are so small and so easily

counted, that individual effort to resolve them is like the falling of a drop of water on granite; centuries are required for the task. And it is for this reason that all progress having been initiated by individual effort, the world has advanced so slowly on the way to perfection as to make the goal seem yet hopelessly distant.

Fortunately from time to time the seeds sown and watered so courageously, by individuals do not fall on arid ground, but spring up hardy and strong, and bursting into flowers of radiant hue, charm the eyes and senses of all who see them. And after that, when the flower has faded and every sepal and petal has left the growing pistil, it develops into fruit, whose richness bears within it the seeds of future plants. But oh, how long a time elapses even then before the new flower is thoroughly appreciated, before each man takes home a slip and plants it and waters it to make it live.

In four thousand years there was only one Socrates and one Christ! How many thou-

sands of years must elapse before the type of Christ is common upon earth.

Vague thoughts such as these often flitted through Philip's mind, and at no time were they so persistent as during the time he spent thinking what to do for Katie. For in her he saw illustrated one of the ideas that had germed in his own mind and was throwing out deep and strong roots.

It was the idea of the mutual respect that should prevail among men, and the restraint such a feeling would entail.

To him it appeared monstrous that any man should be able, *with impunity*, to disturb the quiet and peace of an honest family. He felt that such would not happen if the first article of every religious creed should be 'Respect thy neighbour.' And, also, he longed that man could be awakened to the dangers he suffered, and would in the future suffer, if he left the law of his moral life in the same chaotic state as at present.

A family may be wounded in the tenderest spot, and have to groan and writhe in

silence, lest its honour as well as its heart be touched.

A man may knowingly deceive and betray a poor young girl, an *infant before the law*, bring upon her and her family immitigable shame, and leave his miserable victim to endure all the agonies of despair; perhaps to become so mad and unhappy as to make attempts upon her life, or upon her child's, if she have one. Then only does the law step in to punish. Whom? The man whose wanton self-love has wrought all this misery? or, the poor victim? How easy to answer this question.

Society forbids its members to deprive themselves of their lives, and punishes any such attempts with severity. Why not go a step further, and punish those with equal severity who *give a life* to Society, and refuse to accept the responsibility of their voluntary action? For be it well noted that this action is voluntary only on the man's side. The woman can merely submit.

What could Philip do with Katie? She

had as yet done no wrong ; for surely it is not a crime for a woman to feel love? Yet everything he proposed mentally to himself, he rejected as unsuitable, or as impracticable. He had no sooner resolved that such a plan would be the very thing, when instantly objections crowded in thick and fast and destroyed it.

He had thought of asking his mother to take Katie as her servant ; but Tom often went to see his mother, so that would not do. Then he proposed the Heysons', equally impossible, for the reason that Tom *might* go there. And yet he desired to place Kate with kind people, and somewhere whence he could easily hear how she behaved.

His cogitations, deep as they were, had no result, for the reason that they all were directed to one point, What to do with Kate? It would have been wiser to put it otherwise, and ask, What would Kate *like* to do?

One evening a gentleman was shown into the consulting-room ; and the servant, rapping

at the surgery-door, opened it, and announced
'A gentleman for Mr Darrell.'

'Whoever can it be?' said Philip.

He went into the room, and a big man stood up and came quickly to him, seized his hand in a vice-like grasp, and cried,

'Damme, sir, I hope I see you well.'

Philip recognized the voice instantly, and told Mr Allerton, as he reciprocated the health-inquiry, that he was very well.

'How is my brother Tom?' he said. 'I have not seen him for a few days.'

'Oh, ah! He's—very well, I fancy!' said Mr Allerton; then paused and clutched at his chin in a confused sort of way.

Philip wondered what he was doing, and thought he was very peculiar.

Suddenly Mr Allerton began to wag his head, and make the strangest contortions of visage that ever were made by man. At last the pent-up words found vent—

'Your brother's a very foolish fellow, Mr Darrell.'

‘Ah,’ said Philip. ‘What has he been doing recently?’

Mr Allerton stared a moment, then said—

‘Well, you see it’s about that money he lent you.’

Philip said nothing, from sheer astonishment.

‘It was done I’ve no doubt with a very kind intention, and as you were in such a terrible fix at the time, why it’s partly excusable. Still it was my money, not his.’

‘Good God!’ cried Philip, the words wrung from him in perfect dread of what was coming.

‘Ah, I see, you were not aware of this of course.’

‘I assure you solemnly,’ said Philip, ‘that I knew nothing about it.’

‘Stupid fellow,’ cried Mr Allerton. ‘How very foolish he is! You see he collected the fifteen pounds for me last week, on Saturday, and I find to-day that the amount has not yet been carried to the credit of the name. I asked

your brother about it,—you know he keeps those books. At first he told me it had not yet been paid. I knew that it had. Then he confessed to me how it was he had misappropriated the money, you standing in such urgent need of it. You met him on Saturday and asked him whether he could lend you that amount. At first he refused, but as you showed him how much you wanted it,—he did not tell me what that need was,—he, in a moment of kindness, and relying on your promise to let him have it again on Monday, lent you that which did not belong to him.'

Mr Allerton ceased speaking.

Philip groaned, 'Oh, Tom! Tom!' Then with a strong effort looked up and said to Mr Allerton, 'I'm afraid you cannot have this money to-night, but you shall have it as soon as it can be got.'

Mr Allerton took these words for a confession on Philip's part that he had had the money, as Tom had stated.

'I'm very glad I came to see you,' he said,

‘for I did not like to suspect Tom of doing wrong. Now I must be off again.’

‘I should like you to know Dr Renhard,’ said Philip, ‘as it luckily happens he is in.’

‘Ah, well, so would I. Your brother has a very high opinion of him,’ replied Mr Allerton.

Philip begged to be excused for leaving him, went into the surgery, spoke to the Doctor, who had heard glowing accounts of Mr Allerton from Tom, and brought him into the consulting-room. The two old fellows bowed.

‘Dr Renhard—Mr Allerton.’

‘Mr Allerton — Dr Renhard.’ They bowed again, and shook hands. Each spoke at the same time.

‘I am happy to make your acquaintance,’ said the Doctor.

‘I am glad to know you,’ said Mr Allerton. The two men felt an instantaneous and mutual sympathy arise between them. Both had the same object in life—to make money. Perhaps the handling of much gold had imbued each one’s fingers with a peculiar

tactibility that acted like an electric shock, sending a sympathetic current through them both at once. Anyhow they seemed pleased to know each other, and had not conversed for five minutes before the Doctor invited Mr Allerton to tea, and Mr Allerton had cried 'damme' and accepted.

Philip was rather pleased to have brought them together. Somehow Mr Allerton's communication to Tom had produced very little effect on him. Philip's whole mind was absorbed with the affair of Tom and Katie, and the interest he felt in the former was diminished by that caused by the latter. And besides, he had a feeling of helplessness, such as a man would have whose hands and feet are tied by a robber, who asks him to give up his purse. Of course it is a case of *nolens volens*, and as Tom had quietly shelved the responsibility of his action on to his brother, Philip was persuaded that the only thing he could do was—to pay. So beyond resolving to see Tom, and read him a lecture before he did pay, Philip dismissed

the subject from his mind, and set about his usual work as if there had been no Tom nor Mr Allerton in the world. This state of feeling on Philip's part need not cause any surprise, since we know that when a man is struck by a bullet he does not feel the pain at the instant he is wounded, but some few minutes afterwards.

There is certainly one reflection that he made about this last affair of Tom's, and which we ought to place before the reader.

It occurred to Philip that Tom's conduct and attempted baseness towards Katie were now better explicable by the light of Mr Allerton's communication. How is it possible for a man who does not respect himself to be able to show respect to others?

Tea-time came, and Philip found the Doctor and Mr Allerton amicably discussing questions of the day, and resolving to their own satisfaction some of the social and political problems that then and now agitated the public mind. Philip's presence seemed to add an impetus to the conversation, and to give it

a more argumentative turn than it had at first. Mr Allerton was speaking as Philip entered and took his usual seat at the corner of the table.

‘I quite agree with you, Doctor Renhard, that punishment for crime is not sufficiently severe in this country. There is far too great a leniency shown to criminals.’

‘I am afraid it is so,’ said the Doctor, making a bite at his bread and butter, and taking half the slice into his mouth ; ‘you are quite right in saying that the law is too lenient.’

‘Now I will just tell you a case in point,’ said Mr Allerton, ‘and one which occurred in my own place. One of my workmen, foreman of one of the floors of the warehouse, a very steady fellow, who had been with me for years and years, was found the other day carrying away with him a small box. Well, a sharp fellow of a policeman stopped him, asked him what he had in the box, saw that he hesitated and equivocated, and quietly marched him off to the police station. The box was wrenched

open and found to contain a quantity of valuable jet ornaments—you must know that we occasionally receive a parcel of these things—and when he was asked if they belonged to him he told some stupid tale or other, and the upshot of it all was that they found out that he was one of my workmen, came to me, I identified the goods—or rather one of my warehousemen did—and, in consequence, the fellow was committed for trial; and what do you think was his punishment?’ Mr Allerton paused and looked round.

Philip suddenly said, ‘A brand of shame for the rest of his life.’

‘Pooh!’ cried Mr Allerton; ‘a great deal of use that would be. No, but only fancy that the sentence passed on that man was simply eighteen months’ imprisonment!’

‘Not too much, I must say,’ said Dr Renhard.

‘What was the value of the goods?’ cried Philip.

‘About seven pounds and a few shillings,’ said Mr Allerto .

‘Ah! and if you do not consider it impertinent, what wages did you pay this man?’ asked Philip.

‘What wages? Oh! twenty-five shillings a week,’ replied Mr Allerton.

‘Twenty-five shillings a week are equal to £64 10s. a year, that is for the eighteen months £96 15s.; so that the law deprives that man’s family of about £89 sterling for one single wrong action,’ said Philip.

Mr Allerton stared at him speechlessly, the Doctor laughed and said:

‘Darrell is a republican, and has strange theories.’

‘Oh!’ said Mr Allerton, ‘he may have. But I cannot quite understand how his calculations of £64 and £96 and £89 refer to the punishment of the crime committed.’

‘Allow me to put my idea clearly before you,’ said Philip.

‘Pray do so,’ cried Mr Allerton; ‘for at present I am quite puzzled as to your meaning.’

‘Well, my idea is this. I do not consider

it right or humane to punish a man so severely for a first fault. And, independently of that consideration, I think it is wrong to punish the stealing of an article worth £7 by the forcible confiscation of £90. As everything now is judged by a money standard, I think the sum of value and the sum that could be earned are disproportionate.

‘But however would you have these kinds of offences punished?’ cried Mr Allerton.

‘By making punishment for a first crime simply punishment, and not degradation.’

‘Phew!’ whistled Mr Allerton. ‘You have very odd ideas, Mr Darrell,’ said he, when he left off whistling.

‘Haven’t you ever heard Darrell speak before in that strain?’ said the Doctor.

‘No, I never have,’ answered Mr Allerton; then turning to Philip, he continued:

‘You remind me of my partner, for he has just the same notions. I have often heard him jaw for an hour about the virtues of clemency and all that damned rot. I do believe Frank, my partner, is fool enough to forgive any man

entirely for a first offence. "Damme," I say to him, "you're an idiot, Frank, and all your kindness only encourages the blackguards to thieve again." Why, he even wanted me to overlook that case I just told you about, "because," says Frank, "the man only did it to help his widowed mother." Damme, sir,—but I laughed in his face, I couldn't help it,—what the devil do I care about the man's mother? No, no, you must knock 'em down at once, else they go on thieving as soon as you've forgiven 'em.'

Philip had listened with a smile on his homely, thoughtful face. When Mr Allerton ceased speaking he looked round the table. All the Renhards were secretly rejoicing that Philip had found such a resolute antagonist, and waited with a certain anxiety for Philip's answer.

'You are forgetting the lesson History has conveyed to us, Mr Allerton; and a lesson learned by the wittiest and most enlightened nation of antiquity, the Greeks.'

‘ Ah, I don’t apprehend the drift of your words,’ said Mr Allerton.

The Doctor looked at Philip and nodded his head, as if to say, ‘ Go on ! I see you are on the right track.’ Then Philip continued with the same smile on his face : ‘ I simply wish to remind you, that Draco had to make way for Solon.’

‘ Good, Darrell,’ cried the Doctor.

‘ What the deuce has Draco or Solon to do with England ?’ said Mr Allerton. ‘ And besides, who were they ?’

All the Renhards, excepting the Doctor,—Vaughan was away,—laughed. Philip felt that his classical reference was nearly useless, since his opponent did not understand it. Mr Allerton saw his advantage, or fancied that the laughter was an approval of his arguments, and triumphantly continued :—

‘ That’s where you make mistakes, you theorizers. You don’t care to descend into actual life, but choose to remain perked up with your Solos and Dracons, as far out of

reach as possible. I've heard before something of this kind from a fellow, who called himself a philosopher, and he quietly set to and proceeded to jaw away about the Rich and the Poor, and Masters and Slaves, and all that humbug. Why, sir,'—here Mr Allerton banged his fist on the table,—‘we treat these people a great deal too well. Damme, I am certain we do. Look at them, how they guzzle and drink! The poor are a bad lot, sir, and there's a deal too much fuss made about them.’

‘I believe you are right, Mr Allerton, in this,’ said Philip, with a sarcastic twinkle of the eyes; ‘it is quite a mistake to treat the poor so well. The workhouses are not sufficiently repulsive yet, and the prisons offer great inducements to poor men out of work and out of food to knock some one down, and get arrested. We ought to go back to the times before Howard. Ah! They knew how to settle your vagabonds then! They let them rot away; and if the rats could stomach such loathsome food as a dead human being,

why they allowed the rats to eat the dead prisoner up.'

'Come, come, Philip,' said the Doctor, 'you go too far; and besides, I feel certain you are not serious in your advocacy of a return to the prison-life before the days of Howard. No! although our prison discipline is too lenient by far, I think that is a better extreme than the opposite one.'

'You are wrong, sir,' cried Mr Allerton, now thoroughly excited and hardly conscious of what he was saying or doing—'you are wrong. The only way to repress crime is to punish the criminal with the greatest severity. I'd have thieves flogged, sir, with the cat-o'-nine-tails.'

'And women whipped again at Bridewell,' muttered Philip.

'I'd make 'em smart, damme I would,' continued the excited man. 'It's all a pack of humbug about clemency and the virtue of kindness to these rogues and vagabonds. Whip 'em and starve 'em, and let 'em rot if they like; of what consequence is a thief more or

less in the world? Of what consequence is——’

‘A soul more or less in Hell?’ muttered Philip.

‘A lot of vagabonds! Whether they die or not, what does it matter?’ continued Mr Allerton. ‘I tell you the world is getting turned quite topsy-turvy with all these new-fangled ideas about kindness and gentleness. How do you teach a dog, or how do you break in a horse? Why, by blows and by starving them into submission. Well, treat thieves and vagabonds in the same manner.’

‘Like brute beasts!’ said Philip.

For a few minutes there was a silence after Philip’s last remark. Then the ladies got up and bade good night to the disputants, after setting the spirit-decanter and hot water, and tumblers and sugar, &c., handy.

Philip and Mr Allerton took some whiskey and water, the Doctor had brandy. And after a few sips on each side, the Doctor turned to Mr Allerton and asked him what he thought of the late Revolution in France and our own Chartist riots?

‘What do I think of them? Why, what all City men think, sir: that the blackguards ought to have been mowed down with grape and canister, as soon as they began to form their beastly processions. It does not do to be lenient or merciful to these agitators. Cut them down, sir, shoot them and kill them wholesale with cannon-shot, that’s the right sort of thing to do.’

‘Yes! That’s very well as far as it goes,’ said the Doctor. ‘But I should like to know your opinions of the Riots. What do you think of their demands?’

‘Of the Chartists, you mean, of course?’ said Mr Allerton.

‘Decidedly! The French Revolution has only a secondary interest for us Englishmen,’ replied the Doctor.

‘Well, sir, I am bound to own that I never took the trouble to investigate the subject; I only know that they were damned low agitators, and my opinion of the whole affair is that they were thorough rogues and vagabonds and ought to have been all shot,’ said Mr Allerton.

The Doctor stared for a moment at the man who acknowledged his ignorance so candidly, and who yet condemned so harshly those of whose motives of action he had not the faintest idea.

But Mr Allerton, with the peculiarity of men who ride a particular hobby, set off again. His hobby was respect for Authority, whatever the authority was, and hearty contempt and hatred for those who dared to arraign the actions of that authority to which he, Mr Allerton, bowed. A patient for the Doctor stopped his tirade for a few moments, and as Philip went out to prepare the medicine required, he was left alone with his reflections.

As soon, however, as the Doctor and Philip returned, Mr Allerton shifted on his chair and opened the batteries of his faulty arguments again on a fresh topic.

The Doctor had mentioned that the last patient was a poor wretch who only earned sufficient money to barely keep body and soul together, so that he hadn't the heart to make her pay for the medicine he gave her.

‘It’s very kind of you, Doctor Renhard,’ said he, ‘to do that sort of thing. But don’t you think it tends to encourage improvidence in these people?’

‘Well, I hardly know how to answer your query,’ replied the Doctor. ‘For really it is difficult to be improvident much on seven or eight shillings a week, which I think the poor woman I spoke of earns.’

‘But that is an exceptional case,’ cried Mr Allerton; ‘she must, besides, have earned more when young; why did she not make some provision against old age? That’s what these people never do.’

‘I fancy it must be for the reason that they hardly ever earn more than is sufficient for their current expenses,’ said Philip.

‘Then they should go to the workhouse,’ said Mr Allerton, ‘and not come plaguing private people to assist them. What do we pay rates and taxes for, if the people don’t go to the workhouses that are provided for them, I should like to know? Why, I am always being troubled by poor people coming to me

begging and whining that they have nothing to eat and can't find any work to do. It's all humbug and nonsense ; they could find work easily enough if they liked.'

'Have you ever tried the experiment of setting one of these beggars to work in your garden, and so assisting him ?' asked Philip.

'No ! Decidedly not !' cried Mr Allerton. 'I wouldn't allow one of the thieving lot to come inside the gate even, if I could help it. It's no business of mine to give them work, it's theirs to find it.'

At this moment the clock on the mantelpiece struck eleven, and Mr Allerton jumped up, swore that he had no idea it was so late, and begging the Doctor and Philip not to forget that he had invited them to dinner some day of the next week, shook hands and trotted off.

'Well !' exclaimed Philip, 'what do you think of Mr Allerton, Doctor ?'

'It is difficult to give much of an opinion on so short an acquaintance,' replied the

Doctor; 'I shall know more about him when we've dined there. Will you go down, as usual, to see after the doors and fastenings, and the gas?'

'Oh yes, sir,' said Philip.

'Then I'll say *Bon soir*,' said the Doctor.

'*Bon soir, Monsieur.*' They shook hands, and the Doctor went up-stairs, whilst Philip dived down into the kitchen regions to see that all was safe.

Then he sat up for Vaughan, who was at a labour, and at twelve he came in disgusted at having missed seeing Mr Allerton, and at not having had any tea. After taking his dog out for a turn up and down the Square, he and Philip stumped up to bed. Philip lay awake that night thinking of Mr Allerton and of Tom. He resolved to put a condition upon his payment of the money Tom had borrowed, or lost, or stolen, and determined to get up very early in the morning and take a cab over to Little Ryder Street.

CHAPTER II.

PHILIP SPEAKS TO TOM ABOUT KATIE—TOM'S PROMISE—HIS
SUBSEQUENT DETERMINATION—A CHANCE MEETING OPPO-
SITE THE SEIGERTS' SHOP—TOM AND KATIE—THE OLD
FASCINATION — JOHN WRIGHT WATCHES — KATE GOES
AWAY WITH TOM—JOHN WRIGHT FOLLOWS—WHAT HAP-
PENED IN THE FOREST GLADE.

PHILIP got up at half-past five, dressed quietly and quickly, came down-stairs, wrote on the slate where he was going, and finding an early Hansom cab in Oxford Street, jumped in, and told the man to drive to Little Ryder Street, St James. It was about a quarter to seven when Philip reached his destination.

A maid-servant was scrubbing and whitening the door-step. Philip could see and smell the unsavoury dust she had raised a minute before by shaking the mat.

‘Which is Mr Darrell’s room?’ asked Philip.

‘I’ll show you, sir,’ answered the servant, somewhat surprised at such an early call, and Philip followed her to the second floor. ‘That’s Mr Darrell’s room, sir,’ said the maid.

Philip knocked. ‘Who’s that?’ cried out Tom.

‘It’s me—Philip!’ said his brother.

‘All right! Wait a minute,’ said Tom, and Philip could hear him jump out of bed and come to open the door.

‘Whatever have you come here for?’ said Tom.

‘I’ve come to talk to you about the fifteen pounds you lent me last Saturday,’ replied Philip.

Tom laughed, and got into bed again. Philip went and pulled up the blinds.

‘Has old Allerton called upon you about the money?’ said Tom.

‘Yes! He came last night,’ said Philip; then continued—

‘Now, just look here, Tom, I’m going to

pay this money for you, simply because I do not care to see the name we bear in the Police Reports of the daily papers. What a fool you must be to do this sort of thing! I can't understand it. You can get on as well as anybody in the world, if you like to stick manfully to it.'

'My dear fellow,' said Tom, 'I'm very fond of variety, and work is *so* monotonous!'

'That's humbug,' cried Philip, 'and you know that as well as I do. But mark you, Tom, it is the last time that I do it for you. You would drain the Treasury if they would let you. Now I shall have heavy expenses the next two months, nearly forty pounds for fees for examinations, and if I pass I mean to buy a partnership in some practice and get married.'

'Oh! The devil you do!' said Tom.

'Yes! and so you see,' continued Philip, 'that henceforth I shall not be able to help you in the slightest degree. And I wish to make one condition in this matter, otherwise I'm hanged if I'll pay even this amount for you.'

‘What’s that?’ said Tom.

‘Why, you must promise me sacredly never to attempt to find out or hurt Katie Wright, the girl you made pretended love to at Shirley.’

Tom started, looked at his brother, who had fixed his eyes on his face, and laughed.

‘Why, my dear fellow, I can promise you that all the easier that I have quite forgotten all about the little wench. She was only a common workman’s daughter, and really not worth making a fuss about. Her stupid old fool of a father nearly killed me with a bludgeon, and if it hadn’t been for little Kate, who clung to him and prevented him from advancing, I should never have made old bones, I can tell you,’ said Tom.

‘Very well, then,’ said Philip; ‘you promise me never to molest the girl again?’

‘I do! on my word of honour,’ said Tom.

‘Very well, then,’ repeated Philip, ‘I’ll send Allerton the fifteen pounds; but for God’s sake, Tom, don’t do that sort of thing again. You know I do as I say, and I

declare to you I won't shield you from the consequences of your stupidities again.'

With these words on his lips, Philip shook hands with Tom and ran down-stairs, jumped into his hansom, and got back to the Doctor's in time for breakfast.

Tom turned over on his side, and tucking the clothes around him went off to sleep again, feeling as cool as if he had never done any wrong in his life. He dreamt about Katie, as was natural, and thought about her as he was washing and dressing. It was perfectly evident to him that Philip knew all about that affair at Shirley. Tom had been there once only since he escaped John Wright's cudgel, and the first thing he had seen was the placard stuck on a railing offering a reward for the apprehension of John Wright, charged with murdering Kate Wright, his daughter. It had given him a sort of a shock at first, and he read carefully the description of the man, and remembered at once that a man answering to this description had bidden him good day in the wood, and it was the same man who had

rushed at him with the cudgel. So Tom had quietly returned to London and dismissed Katie from his mind. If her father had killed her she could not certainly afford him, Tom, any further pleasure. Ergo, what was the good of thinking anything more about her? Certainly he had felt at the time very savage that the old father should come in and spoil his sport just as he was about to trap the game.

Now that Philip had made it a condition of his paying the money he had 'borrowed' of Mr Allerton, that he, Tom, should promise to leave Kate unmolested for the future, why, it followed necessarily that Philip would not have exacted the promise unless Katie were alive. At once Tom, with the baseness of a depraved mind, jumped to the conclusion that Philip was toying himself with Katie and did not wish his enjoyment to be disturbed. Full of this idea, he completely forgot his promise, or if he remembered it, threw it aside as worthless, and in no way calculated to stop him in his designs.

Tom knew that his brother had not been

out of town for more than six weeks, and it was quite that time since he himself had left Shirley, the day of the row in the wood. Therefore Philip must have met Katie in London, and it was rational to surmise that she was in London still. So that Tom determined to seek her out. He did not quite know what steps to take in the matter, and for a few days did nothing. But Chance did more for him than all his scheming and talent could have accomplished.

He had business one day in Holborn, and was walking briskly along when he suddenly caught sight of a man, standing in an angle of a wall, looking straight before him, and the features seemed familiar to him.

Tom stopped short and scrutinized the man's face. Yes, it was really one he knew, for it was John Wright keeping his lonely watch in the midst of the passing crowd. Tom recognized him well, and instantly began to put one and two together. What was John Wright doing in London? What was he doing in Holborn?

John Wright happened to look round, and met Tom's eyes fastened on his face. The blood shot over it, and a fierce gleaming shone from his eyes as he recognized the man to whom he laid all his misery and whom he had sworn to kill. He grasped a stick he held with a menacing movement, and was about to make a step forward when he noticed that Tom was laughing at him. This added to his fury and rage by showing him how weak and powerless he was. It was not in this crowd and before all the world that he could take his revenge. No, he must still wait and watch. Tom seemed to read these thoughts as they passed through the man's brain, and his face turned white.

John Wright saw this, and in his turn smiled ; then turned his eyes away and looked down.

Tom had noticed, as he walked up, that the man was looking straight before him. He followed the direction that look must have taken, and at once recognized the baker's shop, and remembered that it was there Philip had

called to see a patient. By a sudden twist of thought, he connected all these ideas into one. His promise not to see Kate, John Wright watching the baker's shop, and Philip's visit there, all seemed to be intimately connected. He looked up to the window above the shop. It was open, but no one was there.

John Wright had followed the direction of his enemy's glance, and noticed that he looked at the baker's shop—and looked inquiringly. The poor wretch had been watching and watching, but had never seen Tom go in, or come out; and in a moment he suspected that perhaps after all Tom did not know that Katie was there.

Suddenly he saw a triumphant smile on Tom's face; he turned, looked to the fatal window. Katie was there, full in the light, and Tom had seen her. The shock was too great for the poor weakened wretch to bear, and with a groan he fell fainting on the pavement. Tom instantly crossed the road, forgetting everything—his promise to his brother, his duty to his employer, and the danger of

John Wright's revengeful anger, in his mad desire for Kate. She looked prettier than ever, and Tom's lustful love awoke again as strong as before. He entered the shop. Mrs Seigert came out, and recognized him as the gentleman who came once with Mr Darrell.

'Mr Darrell asked me to bring a message from him for Miss Wright,' said he. 'Can I see her?'

'Oh, yes! certainly,' said Mrs Seigert, and called up the stairs to Katie: 'A gentleman from the Doctor's, Katie.'

Minnie was out, unfortunately, or she would have recognized Tom, and he would have been prevented from going up. As it was, he ran lightly up the stairs. Kate heard his footsteps, and turned to the door with an expectant look upon her face. She seemed to have a presentiment as to who it was.

Tom tapped at the door, and said, 'May I come in, Miss Katie?' He heard a stifled cry in the room. Kate had recognized his voice. Taking it for granted that he might enter, Tom turned the handle of the door and

walked into the room, carefully closing the door after him.

‘At last I have found you, Kate,’ he said.

Kate did not move. She was trembling from head to foot, and looked down lest she should see his face.

Tom came up to her and knelt down by her chair.

‘Katie! Darling! Won’t you speak to me?’ he cried. The old tender accents, the old loving words! How powerful they were!

Kate looked up, and met Tom’s burning glance. One look was enough! Tom stood up and Kate came quickly to him and was folded in his arms, while his hot kisses rained upon her face.

‘Tom! Tom!’ was all she could say. She loved him as ardently as ever, and all the words of grave warning that had been said to her were forgotten in the happiness of being kissed and fondled again by her lover.

Tom spoke, and his voice filled her with delight, and flooded her whole being with exquisite joy. She almost lay in his arms, and

her eyes were closed that Tom might kiss the soft white eye-lids. All the forgotten warnings from Philip and even from Minnie had been perhaps powerless for being harshly given. At any rate they had no effect upon her, Tom's presence had driven away every idea of danger, whilst he actually brought danger with him. In every movement of his hands, in every word, in every kiss from his lips there lurked a treacherous serpent. Could deadly thoughts tinge our breath with poison, Kate had surely died that afternoon ! All the arguments he had used at Shirley to persuade Kate to go with him, anywhere and everywhere, he used over again ; and used them just as forcibly. The picture he drew of their happiness together charmed Katie's heart, and aroused the mad intoxication of her senses. She allowed Tom to undo her dress and to bury his burning face in her bosom, and her heart leapt and beat convulsively to the kisses he pressed upon her. All the terrible longings of love were aroused in her by the touch of his hands, and her eyes swam in

a hot moisture that told how much she was excited.

Tom held her at that moment entirely in his power, but with his infernal cunning delayed his hour of triumph till he could have her completely, and alone with him, away from all fear of interruption. So he contented himself with kissing her, and gradually calmed her passion down by whispered words of caution and warning. Presently Kate raised her head, and her eyes swam with tears as she asked Tom to come soon and take her away.

Tom promised ! and this time he intended to do what he promised. Shortly after this he bade Katie wait patiently and quietly for him, and he went away.

He neither looked to the right nor the left, but walked straight on, completely lost as to what he intended to do. At last he remembered that he had some business to do for Mr Allerton, and mechanically set about doing it.

When Tom left her, Katie ran to the window and looked out to see if she could see him going away. She could not ; but sud-

denly her gaze met that of an old man, standing near the lamp-post under her window. He was haggard, white, and his eyes were wild and blood-shot. A horrible expression came from them as he saw Katie's flushed face and her unfastened dress, for she had forgotten that. Kate started back as she saw this glance fixed upon her, and with a scream fell back from the window on to a chair.

She had recognized her father !

Mrs Seigert ran quickly up-stairs and found her almost fainting. However, after sniffing at a bottle of smelling salts, she recovered, and when Mrs Seigert asked her what had made her scream, she replied that she had seen a man nearly run over in the road.

This answer satisfied Mrs Seigert, who had no suspicions of the facts of the case, and she went down.

Kate did not dare look out of the window again, lest she should see her father. She was terribly afraid of him, and still remem-

bered the blow he had struck her in the Shirley wood.

Meanwhile he, poor wretch, waited and watched. After having seen Tom go in the house once he resolved to watch more closely than ever. He only worked half the night now, and had to live on half the food he had been accustomed to. But whilst he did work, he worked so very hard that he soon earned nearly as much as before. With a strange resolution he stinted himself more every day, in order to lay by a few more pence.

All day long he kept at his post, watching the house. At night he rushed to his work and laboured with convulsive energy, all the time in a fever of dread lest his child should again meet her lover, perhaps be taken away by him. As soon as dawn appeared he left his work and came, half-starved and shivering, to resume his sad vigil. Days passed, and Tom did not return, but Katie knew that he would come, so waited patiently.

In fact, Tom was looking for a small house some little distance from town. He found

one near Low Leyton, in Essex, close to the Epping Forest ; put some furniture, which he hired, into it, and gave up his lodgings in Little Ryder Street, till he should return to London. When he had got everything ready he found that his supply of cash had dwindled very seriously. How to replenish it he did not know for the moment. Luckily his quarter's salary would soon be due, then he could manage everything very nicely. He paid Kate one more visit and told her of his arrangements, and of how soon he could take her away.

Katie was in a fever of impatience, and implored Tom to let her go with him at once. That, he explained to her, was out of the question, and the poor girl was obliged to curb her impatience, and wait.

Quarter-day came. Tom was paid, and obtained his usual thirty-five pounds. He had no debts, having employed the remains of the fifteen pounds to settle all outstanding claims, and pay for his lodgings, &c.

Then he took a cab, threw his luggage on

the top, and drove to Seigert's shop in Holborn. He had planned everything, so that there was no chance of his failing in his enterprise. He had even written a letter, purporting to come from Philip, telling the Seigerts that he had found a good situation for Katie, and that his brother Tom would take her to it, as he himself could not get away. His handwriting was very much like Philip's, and to that he trusted.

Everything seemed ready disposed for his success; Minnie had left the day before, Mrs Seigert had no suspicion of him, and Katie was eager and ready. As the cab drew up to the door John Wright started forward and placed himself near it. He waited and watched.

He saw Tom go in, speak to Mrs Seigert, and hand her a letter. Mrs Seigert read it, nodded in acquiescence, and went up-stairs with Tom, leaving the letter on the counter. John Wright darted in and picked it up, and thrust it into his pocket, then went out again and waited. He was in an angle of a wall, so that he could see without being seen.

The poor ignorant man felt a sublime joy at the prospect of soon, perhaps, being able to wreak his revenge. He looked upon Kate as already sullied and lost, and without feeling pity for her, only felt hatred for her seducer. It had never once occurred to him to take Kate away with him. He did not know even that he had the power to compel her to return home. Perhaps if he had known he would not have cared to exercise his right, since in his eyes Katie could never be anything again but a lost and degraded woman. So he had concentrated all the power of his ignorance, and that, God knows, was great, to one object, to one purpose, to one end—that end was his revenge. To kill Tom, whose name even he hated savagely, and afterwards, perhaps, to kill himself, was all he now lived for. He had forgotten his poor wife, left lonely at Shirley; he had thrust his daughter out from his heart; he had even abdicated his own personality, since he no longer thought of his hunger, his wretchedness, his haggardness. He did not even know that he was haggard;

he had never seen his face in a looking-glass since the day he left Shirley. His self-abnegation began and ended in one thing—a frightful desire to kill Tom.

So waiting and watching he stood there, presently saw Kate come out dressed plainly and warmly, a man helped her to enter the cab, it was Tom. John Wright saw all this through a blood-red haze, but when the cab moved, he shook himself savagely and darted after it. He kept behind the cab at a quick trot, holding on occasionally to the iron bar at the back to help him. Down Holborn, across Farringdon Street, up Newgate Street, through Cheapside and the Poultry, by Lombard Street to Fenchurch Street, and stopping at the station, John Wright ran forward, and daringly offered to help the cabman to get down the boxes. Tom was thinking so little about him that he actually dropped a three-penny piece into his hand. John Wright heard Tom tell the porter to label the boxes for Leyton, and instantly went forward to the ticket office, which was fortunately open, and

took a third-class ticket to Leyton. Tom's threepence helped him to pay the fare. He watched Tom get into a first-class carriage with Katie; he hunted and found a third-class just beyond the carriage they got into. There he took a seat near the window and watched.

He still had his thick cudgel in his hand; he had darkened and carved it till it looked more like a thick walking-stick than a bludgeon.

'Low Leyton! Low Leyton!' shouted the porters. John Wright jumped out, and giving up his ticket, ran half out of the station, remaining so that he could see everybody who came out after him. Always waiting and watching! Soon he saw Tom and Katie come. Tom hailed a cab, their luggage was placed on the roof, and the man drove off. As they passed him John Wright darted after the cab, and fastened himself to it as he had done to the cab that took them to Fenchurch Street.

Always going at the same jog trot, there was something animal in this man's manner of

following the vehicle. His face expressed a sombre joy, and his whole body gave one the idea of nothing more than a dogged resolution. His feet were lifted mechanically, for he was horribly weary ; and he was faint from weakness, caused by hunger. The cab stopped at a little house, hardly more than a stone's throw from the forest. An old woman, a servant probably, came to the door and received Tom and Katie with a low curtsy. Her face bore a horrible expression, and she smiled as if she knew very well who Katie was.

Tom had given out that he was coming there to live with his sister, and had engaged this elderly female in the village as a fit caretaker.

John Wright watched it all with a calm begotten of unwavering patience.

They went in ; he sat down outside under the palings of the little scrap of front garden, and leaning against them, drew from his pocket a hunch of bread, which he ate.

He waited like this for some time, he was probably waiting for night. It was growing

dark already. Presently he started, he heard a door open, and without seeing him, Tom and Kate came out, walked across the path, and entered the forest. John Wright sprang to his feet, grasped his cudgel, and followed them.

God knows what happened in that wood. Only a mournful shriek for help rose up to Heaven. Then another—then came silence, broken by the sound of a man crashing and running away through the underwood.

Presently a young girl—it was Katie—rushed out of the forest, her hands reddened with blood-spots, her face livid. She screamed once, ‘Help!’ then fell fainting on the roadside.

The neighbours soon collected, Katie was raised and carried into a house. She was in a dead swoon, and lay like a log in their arms. Some men rushed into the forest, and after a lengthened search found a man’s body, the head bleeding from a blow dealt by some heavy instrument. The next morning a thick blood-stained cudgel was discovered near the spot.

They carried Tom Darrell into the same house that Kate had been taken to. He appeared as if dead. A doctor was sent for. He was a man of the Allerton school, and after feeling Tom's pulse, and declaring that he was still alive, only being stunned from the blow, turned his attention to Kate. For some time he could not get her out of her faint, and after trying many remedies ineffectually, was about to bleed, when Katie opened her eyes and looked straight at him. Something in his face seemed to frighten her, for she suddenly sprang off the sofa on which they had laid her, pushed every one out of her way, and shrieking, 'Tom! oh, Tom!' rushed out of the house and into the forest.

'Well,' cried the doctor, 'that's a nice young woman! What a thump she gave me, to be sure!'

They soon brought Tom to his senses. He was carried up-stairs, and placed in a bed, the doctor enjoining the greatest quiet and silence. They found in his pocket a letter

from Philip, to whom they telegraphed to come immediately.

Philip got this telegram at half-past nine, and sending for a hansom, drove all the way there at a terrible pace.

The cabman knew the way well, and in an hour's time, about, drew up his horse outside the house where Tom lay.

Philip paid him handsomely, and dismissed him, and knocking gently at the door, stated who he was, and was admitted.

As far as they could, they gave him an account of the affair; but Philip was totally unable to understand it. Later—months afterwards—he found it all out.

Tom was breathing heavily as he went up to his bed-side, but Philip started back amazed and sorrowful. They had cut off Tom's hair, and a rag dipped in cooling lotion was wrapped round his head. Here and there were ends of sticking plaster, showing beyond the wet cloth. He was sleeping, and seeing that, Philip felt that there was not much danger.

Mrs Seigert, the next morning, noticed over the way, in the same position, in the same place, and with the same haggard face, only this time it was more haggard than ever, the man whom she had observed for more than three weeks past looking up to the window of Katie's room. It was John Wright, grown cunning through crime, returned to his old post of waiting and watching as if nothing had happened, and as if he had not been away the night before. Only he had not brought his black carved cudgel back with him.

One of his mates remarking that he had not got it, he answered, when asked what he had done with it, that he had given it to a gentleman.

‘How much did you get for it?’ asked the mate.

‘Threepence,’ replied John Wright.

CHAPTER III.

STRANGE CONDUCT OF MADAME DE BRENNE — ADÈLE
 HEARS FROM PHILIP—MME DE BRENNE BECOMES WORSE
 —DISAPPEARANCE OF THIS ECCENTRIC WOMAN—PHILIP
 HURRIES TO MAIDSTONE—PHILIP AND ADÈLE—MME DE
 BRENNE SUDDENLY RE-APPEARS AND MAKES AN AMUS-
 ING REQUEST—PHILIP GOES BACK TO HIS BROTHER.

IT is some time now since we last saw Mme De Brenne, and certainly that is a fact much to be regretted. The worthy lady, who puzzled poor Philip by her strangely abstruse and complicated questions on metaphysics and the construction of fire-grates, has become more peculiar than ever. There are certain habits and certain states of health which become stronger and more enthralling the longer they continue their hold upon us.

Now it was a debatable point whether the eccentricities of Madame De Brenne were

caused by a habit or by a peculiar state of health. Adèle was firmly persuaded, first, that her mother was excessively fond of her; secondly, that it would be a terrible thing to lose her; and thirdly, that her mamma was very delicate.

It must, parenthetically, be remarked that Madame De Brenne was a woman of great parts and exceedingly clever, so much so that she had long ago succeeded in acquiring a marvellous influence over her daughter. What Madame thought right, Adèle agreed to; a word, a wish from Madame was law to Adèle; and so much had this influence moulded Adèle's character that the Heysons were apt to say that there *was* no Adèle at *Ailsey Villa*, there were only two Mesdames De Brenne, a young one and an old one, or more correctly speaking, a voice and the echo to that voice. It was only when away from her mother's influence that the originality of Adèle's character showed itself, and then but in a slight degree.

Now Madame De Brenne's chief character-

istic was profound selfishness, but so cleverly was this defect hidden under an appearance of intense love and interest in her child, that people were thoroughly imposed upon by it, and often warmly applauded and admired some action of hers, which, under its loudly proclaimed object of Adèle's welfare, would have shown to the acute observer nothing but selfishness.

Madame chiefly showed her love for her daughter by preying upon her, and living to a great extent at her expense.

Adèle inherited from her father a sum of £2000, and from her uncle a further amount of £1500. This money was invested in $3\frac{1}{2}$ % consols, and produced about £120 a-year. Madame, who was supposed to be earning large sums by her teaching, in reality only earned about £80 a-year, and even that sum might at any time be diminished by the sudden withdrawal of some one of her few pupils.

It had long been a settled conviction on the part of Madame De Brenne that her dear

child Adèle was very delicate. So strongly did Madame feel on this point that she had succeeded in persuading Adèle herself that her appearance of good health was totally deceptive, that the brightness of her eyes was hidden fever, and the rose-colour in her cheeks nothing but hectic. Consequently Madame felt really obliged to order large quantities of wine for dear Adèle! who seldom drank a single glassful. Wines are expensive, especially when one has a taste for old dry tawny Port and well-matured Sherry. And as summer drinks, good Santerne and Hock are not the cheapest of beverages.

Now Madame had a distinct horror of giving her child anything that was not of the very best, consequently she always ordered the wines of the finest and best known brands. And wonderful to say, these wine-bills were always punctually paid every year. This is how the matter was managed.

During Adèle's minority the income of her fortune was to be paid to her mother for her support. This amount quickly became

insufficient to defray the ever-increasing expenses of the house. One of the peculiarities of the bequests to Adèle consisted in the fact that she could at any time draw out from the Bank, or in other words, could sell out any amount not exceeding £100 at a time. And in order that no follies or extravagances on her part should tempt her to fritter away her money, it was imperative that Madame De Brenne, also, should sign the order to the Broker. Her husband and his brother had reposed the greatest confidence in her, and both had felt that they could not give Adèle a more trustworthy guardian than her own mother.

Now towards the end of each year their landlord sent them a polite letter intimating that as the rent of the past year was still unpaid, he would thank Mme De Brenne for a remittance of the amount. Similar letters came from the trades-people; sometimes it was the butcher, sometimes it was the grocer. These letters invariably brought on an attack of hysterics, ending in a violent fit of weeping,

Madame always bewailing her sad inability to earn more money to keep the trades-people and the rent properly paid. Be it noticed that there never came any such letter from the wine-merchant !

Adèle, seeing her mother's distress at these times, would come to her assistance, and after a great deal of coaxing and tender insistence, manage to persuade her to allow her to draw out some money from the Bank sufficient to pay the bills. Madame never yielded her consent and signature without being very much entreated, and only then did so under protest. Consequently Adèle always felt that the responsibility for these periodical sales of stock rested entirely with her. As they had bought in at 92 and very often sold out at 85 or 86, it can be easily imagined what inroads were made upon Adèle's little fortune.

When the money was obtained Madame would quietly settle the outstanding claims.

Now recently, that is, since the time Philip had begun to woo Adèle, Madame's eccentricity of manner had greatly increased ; and

with this the expenses of the house had expanded almost in direct proportion.

It was no longer simply on Sunday that Madame suffered from her attacks of faintness, she began to suffer in the same way on Monday as well, then on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Her pupils left her one by one—she did not appear to care ; her weakness increased, loss of appetite, and sometimes of the power of speech, and usually a peculiar unsteadiness of gait affected her ; yet she did not send for a Doctor. Adèle had proposed to do so once when her mother was more than usually ill, and Madame turned upon her like a fury and forbade her doing anything of the kind, and spoke so harshly and roughly to her, that Adèle crept out of the room, and ran up-stairs to her own little bed-room and wept passionately. The poor girl was becoming very unhappy.

At times Madame De Brenne would get up and come down to breakfast entirely free from all the symptoms of weakness that so alarmed poor little Adèle, and nothing re-

mained behind to remind any one of it, but a certain puffed, swollen, and dusky red condition of Madame De Brenne's face.

Weeks would pass without any fresh attack of her distressing complaint, and in that time Madame would be to Adèle what she had always seemed to be, a fond, loving, and tender parent. She would regain in two days all her old influence over her child, and Adèle would begin to feel happy again, and to think that at last her mother would never be 'ill' any more.

It was just after the events described in the last chapter that Adèle one morning received her usual weekly letter from Philip, only it was three days over-due, and it was dated from Leyton, and its contents were as follows :—

*'Low Leyton, Essex,
'July 19th, 185—*

'MY DEAR ADELÈ,

'I CAN see your start of surprise at the

heading to this letter, but as you read on you will understand why it is that I am writing from here instead of —— Square.

‘ Oh ! darling, I have been in such misery for the last four days. Tom has nearly died. I don’t know how it all happened, or why it happened ; I have only been able to learn that Tom had taken a little house here close by, and on the 15th came down accompanied by a lady, whom I have not yet been able to ascertain. After tea-time they walked together under the big trees in Epping Forest. Some man followed them, and almost instantly two cries for help came from the wood. Then the girl who had come with Tom ran out of the forest calling, “ Help,” and fainted on the road-side. Some men rushed towards the spot whence the cries came and found Tom nearly dead. He had received a horrible blow on the head, and was bleeding a good deal. It is probable that the bleeding has saved his life, otherwise he might have had inflammation of the brain. The next morning a thick, dark-coloured cud-

gel, covered with blood, was found near the spot.

‘ They had carried the girl to this house, and soon after brought Tom here too. They were going to open a vein in her arm, as she did not recover from her faint, when she suddenly got up and ran out of the house, screaming, “Tom ! Tom !” They telegraphed for me, and I came down in a cab.

‘ I have not slept a single hour since I have been here. Tom lies in a species of comatose state, and often I have fancied that he was dead. I give him brandy and liquid jelly, and strong beef-tea every hour, and a powerful reviving medicine every two hours night and day. I never thought I loved Tom so dearly till I found myself here by his bed-side and saw him lying like death before me. Sometimes we have had quarrels, and, God forgive me, I have been very angry with him.

‘ He is better to-day, and I fancy that he recognized me. I shall not leave him till he is out of danger.

‘ Give my love to dear Madame, and with
mil baisers pour toi, chérie,

‘ Believe me,

‘ Your loving

‘ PHILIP.

‘ P.S. I have just been told that the poor
young girl’s body has been found in one of
the shallow ponds in the forest. She must
have been mad from grief, and thus have
drowned herself.’

Adèle received this letter one morning at
breakfast-time. She read it as she waited for
her mother, who was somewhat late that morn-
ing, to come down.

When Madame entered the room, Adèle
shuddered even before she looked up, and
beheld her mother gazing at her with a certain
sickly smile on her face that Adèle knew only
too well.

‘ Qu’est-ce que tu-fais-là ? ’ she asked, in a
broken voice.

‘ I am reading Philip’s letter, mamma,’ re-
plied Adèle.

‘Hun!’ grunted Madame, and took her seat. The coffee was made, and only wanted pouring out; this displeased Madame, for usually she made the coffee.

‘Who made this stuff?’ she cried.

‘I made it, Ma,’ replied Adèle.

‘Then you’d better take it and drink it. It’s filthy,’ said Madame. She attempted to hand it over to her daughter in an indignant manner, but only succeeded in upsetting the coffee-pot, knocking the milk-jug off the table, and sending a cup and saucer to join the fragments on the floor.

‘Oh, Mamma!’ cried Adèle, ‘what is the matter with you?’

Her mother only turned and snarled at her. Oh! how like an animal the woman looked at that moment! Her red, puffed-out face, and bleared, inflamed eyes, gave her the appearance of a drunken pig.

The coffee really was very good, but Madame was in one of her cantankerous moods. She snatched up Philip’s letter and stood by the window reading it, her body

swaying to and fro all the time. When she had finished it, she deliberately tore it into long narrow slips, and threw them on the ground.

‘That Philip is a fool,’ she said, and looked at Adèle with a menacing frown. Adèle had sprang forward, but seeing that her mother had torn up the letter, she sat down again and began to cry.

‘You’re quite as big a fool as he is,’ cried Madame. ‘You’re so very loving, you two. Ung! Great deal he cares about you. He only comes after your money, you fool.’

‘Oh, stop! Mamma! I won’t have you talk like that about Philip. He does love me,’ said Adèle, weeping more and more.

‘Does he? You’re a fool, I tell you. Yes, you are. Don’t tell me you’re not a fool!’ roared Madame, working herself into a rage. ‘I say you are. He only comes after your money. But he’s a fool too, and won’t get what he comes after, I’ll take good care. Ha! Ha! He doesn’t know everything, for all his cleverness.’

Her merriment was more horrible to listen to than her outburst of fury. She chuckled over these words, and sniggered and laughed, and hugged the idea to her.

‘Philip was very clever, but he was a fool beside her.’ So she went on. Then as suddenly she broke off and staggered out of the room ; and Adèle heard her go up to her bedroom and lock the door, and for a minute her heavy tread shook the house.

Adèle stooped, and still crying, busied herself with picking up the broken plate and things that her mother had knocked off the table. She could not eat nor drink anything. She tried to piece Philip’s letter together, but could not succeed. Her tears rendered everything she looked at misty. Poor little thing ! how changed she was !

Philip had not been to Maidstone for nearly seven weeks ; and excepting the interval of the week just passed, Madame De Brenne had been strange and violent during the whole time.

The Heysons wondered to see Adèle grow so thin and so pale, and began partly to

believe that Madame had taken a right view of her daughter's health, and that Adèle really must be delicate. She never told them of the dreadful scenes that took place at home. Even their neighbours did not know it, nor the trades-people; for Adèle bribed the servant never to say a word to anybody, excepting that her mistress was ill. Perhaps no one but the wine-merchant knew thoroughly what was the matter with Madame De Brenne. And as he made a good thing by it, it could not be expected of him to say a word against the worthy lady; especially as recently he had managed to increase the profit he made out of it by substituting an inferior wine for the fine brand Madame ordered. As she did not notice the difference of bouquet, the honest wine-seller concluded that her sense of taste was deteriorating, and that consequently it would really be a shame to waste superfine liquor in such a manner; besides, he took care to send what he supplied with plenty of alcohol in it. The stronger the better seemed now to be Madame's idea of wine.

Adèle had ordered the breakfast table to be cleared, and sat down by the window with a book in her lap, trying to read. Poor child ! her eyes were still swollen from the crying at breakfast time, and she had a dull feeling of anger against her mother that she vainly endeavoured to suppress. She could not forget the coarse insults levelled at her, and, far harder to forget, those against Philip ! She tried to read. It was impossible ; so she threw the book on the table and got up, meaning to put on her hat and go out for a walk. Catching sight of her own sorrowful, tear-stained face in the looking-glass, and even in her sadness retaining that ineradicable germ of coquetry that exists in the heart of every woman, she thought at once that she could not go out looking such a fright ; and she went up to her room and bathed her face and her eyes. As she was smoothing her hair, she heard her mother's door open and her footsteps on the stairs. Then the street door opened. Adèle ran to the window and saw her mother walk

unsteadily to the gate, open it, and go out into the road, leaving the garden-gate open.

Adèle returned to the looking-glass, had a last glimpse at her face, shook her head, though, to see that her eyes were still a little red, and went down-stairs again, put on her hat, and telling the servant she would soon be back, went out for a walk across the fields. Towards dinner-time Adèle returned, her sorrow forgotten, or purified and softened by the calm of the fields, and humming a merry song as she went up to put her hat away.

‘Has Ma come in, Jane?’

‘No! Miss! She aint come back yet.’

‘Oh! of course not; she won’t be at home to dinner to-day. It is the Wrestlaws’ day; she has lunch there!’ cried Adèle.

Madame De Brenne had not told her that she had lost these last pupils two weeks before. Adèle did not even know that her mother was without a single one, for Madame had said that they were all having their holidays. So Adèle ate her dinner gaily and drank a tumbler

full of cold water dashed with Sirop de Groseille, home made. She did not have any wine. Who was it drank it, then?

The afternoon passed, tea-time came, still no Madame had returned. The evening went very slowly, for Adèle was growing anxious. Supper-time came, without her mother returning.

Thoroughly frightened, Adèle called Jane and asked her to go to Mrs Wrestlaw's, and inquire after Madame. The girl went and soon came back, but with a very red face, and cried out that they had told her Mrs *De Brunne* (so the maid pronounced it) had not been there to-day, and that they had had quite enough of her foolishness. Poor Adèle did not know what to do. The girl, having a shrewd suspicion of the fact of the case, tried to cheer her up, and told her Mrs *De Brunne* would soon be back, &c., &c.

Adèle waited and waited. No one came. Ten, eleven, twelve o'clock struck! Still no one came. Then Adèle paid no attention to

the clock, but sat cold and white, listening for her mother, and hearing nothing. The girl tried to rouse her to go to bed. Adèle shook her off, and fell into the same attitude of eager expectancy. The night passed. The blinds had not been lowered, and the morning light straggling and faint peeped in at Adèle, pale and gaunt from her long vigil. Jane came down at five, and looking into the room, saw her sitting with her hands clasped tightly together, her eyes wide open, her head bent forward, listening. It so terrified Jane, that she ran right out of the house, and never stopped running till she got to the Heysons. There she begged to see Miss Edith, or Miss Florry. She was led to their room, and forthwith prayed them to come to Miss Adèle (the girl called it Miss *Addle*), telling them in a few words all that had happened.

Edith dressed herself at once, and went back with her to Ailsey Villa. Adèle was sitting just as when Jane left. For a time she looked at Edith without knowing her, but

when Edith put her arms tenderly round her, and kissed her, Adèle started, and burst into a violent fit of weeping.

Edith held her in her arms, and rocked her to and fro like a child, till her violent sobs grew less. Then Edith insisted upon putting her to bed, and despatched a note to Mrs Heyson, asking her to come as soon as she could. All Adèle said as they undressed her, for she was quite passive, and let them do everything for her, was, 'Write to Philip! Write to Philip!' No sooner was she in bed than she went fast asleep, probably perfectly exhausted.

Mrs Heyson came and stayed all day, but Mme De Brenne did not return. At night she went back to the Woodlands, leaving Edith with Adèle. The night passed—no Madame. The next day the same; and towards the evening Mrs Heyson, perfectly puzzled as to what to do, telegraphed for Philip. Her husband and Allen were both away on business too important to allow of

their being recalled from it, else she would not have troubled him.

Philip got the telegram at half-past five. Luckily the trains worked well together, and most fortunately Tom was really out of danger, and at half-past nine Philip knocked at Ailsey Villa.

Adèle, who had quite recovered from her long night-watch, knew the knock at once, and flew to open the door. Philip caught her in his arms and kissed her tenderly. Edith came into the passage to welcome him. Then they went into the sitting-room, and soon Philip had heard all, excepting what Madame had said about him. He stood, stroking Adèle's soft hair, gravely listening, and occasionally bending down to kiss her. He then asked Adèle whether he might go up to Madame's bed-room.

'Oh yes, Philip, I'll go with you!' said Adèle.

'I should like to go up alone, my dear child,' answered he. 'Can you get me a light?

Adèle fetched a candle, and silently Philip went up the stairs.

He remembered the last day he had been there, only two months before, and how strangely Mme De Brenne had behaved. He suspected the cause, but had said nothing to Adèle. Now this last affair seemed to confirm his suspicions, and he went alone, lest poor Adèle should see something to give her the same suspicions.

He found the door locked, and with a vigorous kick at the lock burst it open, and went in. He put a chair against the door to keep it shut, and began his search. In the chest of drawers, in the toilet-table, which was made with one deep drawer; under the bed, behind the curtains. Nothing was to be found. Then he looked in the cupboard, something clinking as he opened the door. Here he found five bottles, four empty, one full. He could smell a port-wine odour still in them. In the other cupboard, under a heap of old dresses, he found four more bottles of port. He was leaving the room satisfied with

his search, when his eyes fell on one of those round, high, pillar-like wicker baskets, used ordinarily, I believe, for dirty linen. He noticed that it stood quite near the bed. On opening it he saw nothing but a quantity of dirty clothes, chemises, petticoats, caps, &c., &c. He hesitated a moment before he introduced his hand among this heap, but when he did, felt something hard. He took out the top things, and soon found two bottles, both of brandy; one was full, the other half empty. Replacing the things with a strong feeling of disgust, Philip went to the washing-stand and gave his hands a good wash, and went down to Adèle and Edith, feeling persuaded now that his former suspicions had been correct. He told Adèle and Edith that he had found out what he thought was the fact, and that in his opinion there was no need to be anxious.

‘Where shall you stay, Philip?’ asked Adèle.

‘I don’t know at all,’ he replied. ‘Would there be any harm in my staying here?’

‘I don’t think there would in the slightest,’

said Edith. 'I shall be here with Adèle to-night.'

'All right, then, I'll sleep here on the sofa,' said Philip. And so it was arranged. They had some supper, and Adèle and Edith went up to bed, after Philip had promised that he would try to find Madame the next day.

Philip was very tired, and soon went to sleep. Suddenly he woke again, it seemed to him only a minute after he had lain down, feeling a hand on his arm. Some one was standing by the sofa, with a lighted candle.

'Philip, it's me,' said a voice, that he instantly recognized as Adèle's. He sat up, and his eyes soon got accustomed to the sudden light.

'I couldn't sleep, dear,' said Adèle. 'I wanted to talk to you.'

'Couldn't you wait till the morning, Adèle?' asked Philip.

Adèle without replying sat down on the sofa. Philip had to draw away to make room for her. She had nothing but her night-dress

on. That, as she sat down, opened in front and disclosed her white bosom, the candle she held throwing its light full upon her. Philip put out his hand and drew her night-gown together. As he did so, his hand touched her breast.

He started and blushed. ‘Darling, you must not stay here!’ cried Philip.

‘I must!’ she answered. ‘I want to ask you something, Philip. What is the matter with mamma?’

‘I cannot tell you!’ said Philip, for he did not wish to let her know her mother’s miserable failing. Adèle put the candle on the chair where Philip had put his watch, and bent over to him. Her soft warm breath touched his cheek, her sorrowful eyes were fixed on his, her night-dress fell open again, and involuntarily Philip saw her white bosom and beautiful form. He dared not reach forth his hand again to close it. He was afraid, and trembled! Adèle put her arms round his neck and drew his head upon her breast. Philip could feel the warmth of her body, and hear her heart beat.

‘Philip, tell me what is the matter with mamma?’ Here she kissed his face. Philip’s head was beginning to swim, and he looked through a species of mist. Adèle’s arms were pressing him to her, and her lips were showering kisses upon his face. Philip felt intoxicated.

There are moments in the lives of some men when to resist the impulses of passion becomes the sure test of their honour.

Philip loved Adèle as purely as ever man loved woman, but her presence, in that dress, by him, her warm, soft arms pressing him to her, her bosom, which he could see and feel, the kisses she gave him—all this conspired, and Philip was half maddened.

To resist at such moments! To be great and more than man! This is what Philip had to do. He would not tell Adèle her mother’s shameful secret, and Adèle said she would not leave him till he did. Adèle was now half lying on the sofa, and her night-dress had hitched and hardly covered her. Philip closed his eyes, and his breath came short and fast.

A strange madness was overcoming him. Man is but an animal after all, and Adèle's presence was a terrible trial. Adèle pressed him still closer in her arms, as if to wring from his love what his reason refused to tell her.

Suddenly Philip opened his eyes, conscious that Adèle's were waiting for him to meet her glance. That look acted like an electric shock upon Philip. All the dimness faded from his eyes, all the passion that had intoxicated him fled before the thought that Adèle perhaps did not know that her desire to learn all about her mother was making her immodest. Then Adèle pressed her lips to his. This kiss acted like fire upon him. He hastily thrust Adèle's arms from him and sprang from the sofa.

'Adèle! Adèle!' he said, 'you must go away, or I shall forget what I am doing.'

Something in the accent with which he spoke these words startled Adèle. She seemed suddenly to wake to a sense of her position; she saw the disorder of her dress, and blushing

crimson started to her feet ; she was about to run up-stairs when Philip stopped her, folded her once in his arms, and kissed her tenderly.

‘ Now go up to bed ! ’ he said.

The next morning when Adèle came down her face became crimson as she saw Philip. But he drew her to him and kissed her so lovingly and tenderly that the blush died away, and Adèle felt that Philip did not despise her for her strange conduct in the night.

That morning Philip tried to find Madame De Brenne. He inquired at the police offices and interrogated all the policemen who had been on the London Road beat ; it was of no use, he could learn nothing about her. He returned, therefore, to Ailsey Villa.

As they were sitting down to dinner there came a knock at the door—Jane opened it. Some one walked in, the sitting-room door was opened, and Madame De Brenne, dirty, with unkempt hair and dusty dress, but sober, stood before them. She walked in, sat down after shaking Philip’s hand, and turning to Adèle, said :

‘My dear, I should like a glass of wine.’

That was all. No hesitancy, no shame, no regret. She simply behaved as if nothing had happened.

An awkward silence came over the party. Adèle fetched the wine mechanically and set it before her mother, who took it, filled a tumbler half full, added as much water, and swallowed it all in two mouthfuls. Then she got up and stumped up the stairs to her bedroom.

Not a word was said for some minutes, all sat as if transfixed with astonishment. Then they looked at each other, and Philip laughed, but checked himself on seeing Adèle with her eyes full of tears. Edith said, ‘Thank God!’

That afternoon Philip took train and went back to London and on to Leyton, firmly determined to bide quiet, have a last good fortnight’s hard study, go in, pass his examination, and marry Adèle three days after. When he reached Leyton, Tom was very much better, and mending fast.

CHAPTER IV.

TOM RECOVERS—PHILIP GOES BACK TO WORK—A DEGREE OF M.R.C.S. ENGLAND—A THREE DAYS' HOLIDAY—PHILIP'S MARRIAGE AND HONEYMOON TRIP TO FRANCE — OLD FRIENDS AND PLACES IN NEW LIGHTS — AN URGENT LETTER FROM MRS HEYSON—PHILIP AND ADELE RETURN TO ENGLAND — WHAT HAD HAPPENED DURING THEIR ABSENCE.

DURING Philip's absence at Maidstone Tom had continued steadily to improve. His hat had probably been the cause of the easy recovery from the wound. The cudgel had crushed the hat before it touched his head—and so he had only been knocked down insensible. Fortunately also the scalp was torn, and the blow had been sufficiently violent, being perhaps repeated after Tom had fallen to the ground, to cause some hemorrhage, that in all probability had been the

cause of his escape from death. He was strangely quiet and very patient ; never once murmuring, and expressed by a movement of the head, or the light of the eyes, the gratitude he felt, but had not yet sufficient strength to utter aloud.

Philip was wonderfully affected by this new phase of his brother's life. He did not dare to tell him of the girl's sad death, although he could plainly perceive that Tom was ever thinking of her. To Philip, Tom's usual life had only offered hitherto an uninterrupted succession of mad follies, through which nothing but a most robust health could have brought him safely. Tom had been so confident, and unfortunately so loud in his assertions of his confidence in himself, as to somewhat alienate Philip from him. He seemed, besides, always to look upon Philip as something of a cross between an old anchorite and a woman, for he used to say that Philip had the awkwardness and rigidity of the one, added to the timidity of the other ; and in consequence, Tom had accustomed him-

self in a certain degree to laugh at Philip's manners, and to despise his knowledge. All this, be it noted, whilst he never scrupled to avail himself of Philip's purse, when his own became empty, or held but little to satisfy his many wants.

Philip had felt this species of contempt, under his brother's manner, and, as was natural, was irritated and angered by it. In fact, as before mentioned, he had gradually drawn himself away from him, in consequence of this feeling.

But when he had to sit by his bed-side, and watch hour after hour the feeble flame of life revive, many thoughts came to him that helped him to forget and excuse his brother's want of appreciation. Their mode of life was so very different, the bent of their minds so thoroughly opposite. They actually had few thoughts in common. Tom's mind and character was ever under the influence of his surroundings, and his mobility of ideas had the defect of leading him to imitate the ways and manners, and be but an echo of the

ideas and language, of those with whom he associated. His associations we have sketched in one of the chapters of the first volume.

Philip on the contrary drew his inspirations and his ideas from books, and moulded the life surrounding him by the train of thought produced by his studies. Had he only read as students read, he would have developed into a species of anachronism, living in, but not being of, this century.

Fortunately he possessed a high observing power, and the art of applying it practically. Thus he corrected in his own mind the errors of impracticability and inapplicability of his author's theories to our ordinary daily life. And occasionally his power of knowledge enabled him to conquer his inherent timidity. Then he could clothe his thoughts in good and forcible language. It is easy to understand how two such characters would soon come to feel an antagonism. This, in truth, it was that had more than anything conduced to produce a feeling of coldness between them. As we have already said, these feelings dis-

appeared from Philip's heart as he sat by his brother's bed-side, during those long hours of painful vigil; and all the tenderness of their old intimate relations of childhood came back to him. He had so often been shielded by Tom from punishment and protected by him against the brutality of those bigger than he; and on his side he had often learned Tom's lessons, and written his 'pensums,' and helped to do his school work quickly and well. For at school Tom had always been the stronger in body, Philip the stronger in mind.

So when Tom awoke again to life, and Philip had met his earnest gaze without finding himself recognized, it pained him exceedingly. Then as Tom became stronger, and his mind grew clear, and memory returned, Philip watched the eyes suddenly fix on his face, grow lightful, and finally see him and remember him, and Tom had endeavoured to grasp his brother's hand, but vainly, as he could not lift his arm then. And Philip was amply content after that to sit by him holding his hand with a loving clasp, and watch the

smile of recognition in his brother's face. Tom was so handsome, and his smile so winning and beautiful. His features were pale and etherealized by the loss of blood and his subsequent illness. Philip forgot all their differences and only wept silently, when his brother slept and so could not see his tears, that he should be lying there so weak. Once Tom woke up and found his brother crying silently and perhaps half-unconsciously; Philip never could forget afterwards the look of profound love that spread over Tom's face at that moment.

So the illness brought these brothers together again. Mrs Darrell knew nothing of it, for Philip had written to his mother and invented a sudden journey of Tom's on business to explain his silence.

Tom was able to sit up soon after Philip's return from Maidstone, and by the middle of August to be transported from Leyton to London. There Philip established him in a comfortable lodging near him, and went in to see him every day. It must be said that

Philip returned to the Doctor's a few days before Tom was brought to London.

The kind-hearted people who had so generously succoured Tom in his moment of peril, had always steadily refused to take any manner of payment for their services. Philip had attempted once or twice to delicately ask them to accept some remuneration for the trouble and expense they had been put to. But they declared that they had sufficient means to enable them to commit occasionally the extravagance of a good action, and all the reward they could desire was that of seeing that their efforts had not been without good result. Tom and Philip therefore could only thank them, and actually left them without having once heard their surname pronounced, so that they only knew them and spoke of them as Esther and Simon. I am afraid from their names that these people were Jews! God rewards such deeds as these, as He only can reward! Certainly no human recompense could be found sufficient for such

beautiful compassionate love, as these worthy and virtuous people had displayed.

Philip came back to work with that peculiar zest and enjoyment that men of earnest mind always feel after a period of relaxation. He plunged anew and more deeply into his curriculum of study. His tongue was by turns osseous from the sounding of osteological names, muscular or nervous from rolling out the respective names of muscle and nerve. His constant companion—as much a familiar as that which Albertus Magnus held subservient—was the skeleton in the consulting-room cupboard. He always had a bone in his pocket, scored with the ‘insertions of the muscles,’ in pencil and notes, in hieroglyphics incomprehensible to all but himself. He talked of bones, and his *rêveries* were of the muscular and nervous systems. He was learned upon the *souffle*, *bruit*, and *râle*, and prided himself upon being able to give at once the point of insertion and track followed by any particular muscle. Old students taught

him wonderful combinations of letters, forming words to be used as 'catches' and helps to the memory.

Finally, after a fortnight's hard study, Philip's day for examination came. The ordeal was hard and difficult, but he came out of it unscathed. About a week after he received his diploma, and there wasn't a happier man in all London that day. He had arranged to leave the Doctor's as soon as he had passed his examination, and that very night he took train to Chelmsford and deposited his diploma in his mother's safe keeping. Then after a few hours' delicious talk with her, he tore away again and rushed down to Maidstone, came upon Adèle with a swoop, and carried her off with him to Chelmsford.

There they met Tom, who was finishing his recovery in the country. Adèle and Philip stayed one day, and then returned to Maidstone, where Philip went to the Heysons. He was unable to accomplish his wish of getting married three days after he gained his M.R.C.S. degree; for he found

that he could not be married excepting by *special* licence, unless he lived in Maidstone for fourteen days. However, those days soon passed, and by the beginning of September everything was in readiness for the wedding.

It was a very quiet one,—Edith and Florry Heyson were the bridesmaids, Mr Heyson took it upon him to supply the place of Adèle's father, and there were very few people in the church at the time. Tom of course was present, and officiated as bridegroom's best man. Mr Heyson had insisted upon giving the breakfast at his house. There was plenty of jollity. Philip made a speech, in which *à propos* and *mal à propos* were ludicrously mingled, and only felt happy when the breakfast was over, and he and Adèle were speeding down to Dover, for a trip to France.

Philip gave himself and Adèle the luxury of a first-class carriage for their railway journey. Arrived at Dover, they went to the 'Ship Hotel,' and at nine o'clock took their places on the steamer for Calais. They experienced the usual discomforts of the trip,

and about two o'clock next morning were comfortably installed in the *Hôtel de Londres*.

It was somewhat late before they got up that day, and to Adèle, as well as to Philip, there was a certain strangeness of feeling in their being together. Adèle hesitated for a long time before she got out of bed, and lay watching Philip washing and dressing, laughing at him in a shame-faced kind of way.

‘What a basin!’ said Philip. ‘I do believe some one has sold a large pudding-bowl and persuaded them it’s a wash-hand basin. I shall have to ring for some more water, there’s hardly enough left in this bit of a jug for my teeth.’

Adèle laughed the more as Philip pretended to grumble. As soon as he was dressed Philip said he’d go down to order some breakfast. In reality he saw Adèle’s embarrassment, and wished to spare her any feeling of annoyance. So he gave her a kiss and went down-stairs. No sooner was he gone than Adèle jumped out of bed, and was able to set about her morning’s dressing and

toilet in perfect quiet. She smiled at herself in the looking-glass, and muttered, 'Ce méchant Philippe,' then laughed, and sat before the glass in a very *deshabillée* condition, smiling in a very odd manner.

Soon she woke from her reverie, and in a few minutes finished her *toilette*. Philip had left plenty of water in the jug for her, and presently she opened the door and tripped daintily down-stairs.

Philip was in the coffee-room and half hidden behind a copy of the *Courrier du Pas de Calais*. He looked up as Adèle came in.

'Ah! Te voila, petite. J'ai commandé le déjeuner, tout ce que tu aimes!' he said.

Adèle smiled her thanks to him and took a seat beside him.

'What are you reading, dear?'

'This ridiculous bit of a newspaper,' replied Philip. 'There's nothing in it. How great a difference between this and a *Times* or a *Daily Telegraph*.'

Certainly there was a difference—of type, of paper, and of news.

‘I won’t have you speak like that,’ said Adèle; ‘you mustn’t laugh at French things so much; they’d do better if they could.’

‘Well! never mind for the present—here’s our breakfast. Don’t you feel hungry?’ cried Philip.

‘Yes, very!’ said Adèle. And certainly the silent French waiter, impressed by the coming and going of generations of reserved English people, stood looking on with open mouth.

They made such a breakfast as a young married couple can make and should make, and thoroughly astonished even the impassive-looking waiter. He sprang into activity, however, when Philip addressed him as ‘Garçon,’ with a correct accent and in choice French.

‘Je croyais que Monsieur était Anglais,’ cried the Garçon, and served them with great *empressement*, and politely refused to believe that Philip was English.

‘Oh! Non! Non! Monsieur parle Français trop bien!’ said he.

After breakfast Philip and Adèle went off

for a stroll through the town, and Philip welcomed the sight of the well-remembered bonnets and hats with many a laugh.

But he kept telling Adèle how much everything was changed, how coarse the market women appeared to him. 'They used not to be so,' said he. And he insisted that the whole place used to be so lively, now it was so dull.

'What have they done with the lamp-posts?' he cried to Adèle.

'I never remember any, dear,' replied Adèle.

'Oh, of course not! I keep thinking of Maidstone, and our English country towns,' said Philip.

They soon felt tired of looking into the shop windows, and went back to the hotel.

They intended to go to Bourville and spend their honeymoon there, as both remembered the pleasant times they had there in the old school-days, and Adèle still had some friends in the place. The ordinary *Diligence* from Calais to Bourville had started before they

were out of bed, and they could only get places in a *Voiture* that went no further than Gravelines. So that as soon as they had lunched, they sallied forth, had their luggage carried to the office whence the *Voiture* started, and walked there quietly arm-in-arm. People looked at them as they passed, and some laughed; it seemed unusual to them to see two young folks walking arm-in-arm so affectionately. They reached the office of the *Voiture* and secured their seats.

‘Allons!’ cried the driver, ‘Il faut monter s’il vous plait.’

Adèle *climbed* in, and Philip followed her. A small crowd had collected, and a *sergent de ville* loomed in the distance up the street.

Adèle and Philip got the back seats—the driver let down a board in front of them, and two other folks got in. The driver sat on the shafts and cried, ‘Hu! Là’—the horse pulled, and the machine moved majestically up the street. Philip amused himself with examining the vehicle. It was something of a gig shape on four wheels, with a thick leather hood like

the hoods of pleasure vans ; old and dusty, and worn into cracks and holes. It was very warm, and the thing jogged and shook, and rattled over the stoned street in a most horrible manner.

The driver cracked his long whip, the horse jingled its bells, the hood creaked, and they went along in A 1 style. Philip noticed that the harness was mainly composed of rope, and seemed to be fixed together to the shafts by numerous pieces of wood. One of the shafts was actually held in its place by a piece of rope and a wedge of wood. A fat country-woman, with a face of the colour of a red apple, flirted and joked in a ponderous fashion with the gallant driver.

Presently they reached the Gravelines road, as straight as an arrow for more than two miles, then turned at a right angle almost, and continued nearly straight the whole of the way. Philip and Adèle were almost stifled, and the jolting and the fusty smell of the leather nearly made them sick. Fortunately at every public-house the vehicle stopped, and the

driver and the fat countrywoman adjourned for beer, and a little fresh air came into the *Voiture*. Philip got down once and fetched some brandy and water for Adèle. It was so fiery and disagreeable that she could not drink more than two mouthfuls. Then Philip got her some *Vin de Grâve*—that was rather nice, and Adèle felt better after it. Philip drank about half a bottleful, and also felt refreshed. At three they came in sight of the Gravelines' fortifications, and Philip and Adèle hailed the sight of the tall sedge in the moats with joy. Joy caused by the approaching prospect of relief from their horrible *Voiture*, and recollections of the past school-days.

They alighted at the sign of the *Aigle d'Or*, and took refuge in a long low room, the floor plentifully sprinkled with sand. Wooden-seated chairs were ranged in order against the yellow-washed walls, and the whole place smelt strongly of Government tobacco. Philip asked them to make some tea, as he thought Adèle would like to have some. They brought a pale, washy-looking fluid, that Philip had no

sooner seen than he laughed, for it reminded him of the strange notion French people *have* of tea.

After a great deal of trouble Philip managed to find out a man who had a horse *à louer* and knew some one who could furnish a carriage, and in about two hours the concern came to the public-house to fetch them. A *sergent de ville* came up at the same time and demanded their passports. Philip handed them to him, said that he was an Englishman travelling with his wife, and as the passports were *en règle* the *sergent de ville* handed them back with a bow.

Philip and Adèle ensconced themselves in the vehicle, which was shaped like an omnibus—that is, you got in at the back, and the driver sat in front. The whip was cracked, and the bony animal hitched in the traces, set off at a jog-trot over the paved street, through the several gates of the fortifications,—Philip catching sight of one or two cannon as they emerged from earthworks,—on to the road, and then they spanked along at a rattling pace of four miles an hour !

Jog, jog, jog, jog ! As dull a journey as ever mortal can make. They passed tree after tree of Spanish poplars, straight and sparsely covered with branches ; a big ditch on each side of the road ; seeing occasionally a few skinny, long-legged French sheep grazing in a field. . The driver, who was a youth of about sixteen, picked up another youth at the first public-house out of the town, and together they stopped regularly every time they came to a *cabaret* and took a *choppe de bière*.

Philip got so tired of the jog-trot pace they went at, and so irritated by the delays caused by these fellows each time they stopped, that when they came to the seventh *cabaret*, and he saw them get down again, he threw open the door, jumped out, got on the box, and seizing the *ropes*, gave the horse a crack with the whip, and was half a mile from the *cabaret* before the youths had finished their beer. They rushed after him, yelling, ‘ Bête d’Anglais, Mille Tonnerres—Sapristi,’ and other oaths less choice, but stronger. Philip pulled up and yelled to them,

‘Allez-vous-en au diable, sacrés imbéciles.’

The two fellows stopped short. They had fancied they were driving English folks who knew nothing of French, and consequently would be quite at their mercy, and when they heard the *bête d'Anglais* turn round and swear vigorously at them in their own language, they were utterly flabbergasted. They came and begged Philip to allow them to *monter*, and after a good deal of palavering, he consented, on condition that they should drive straight on, and never stop till they got to Bourville. Then he gave up the rope-reins and got down and entered the *Voiture* again. Quite scared by his vigorous and sudden *coup d'état* the driver kept to his promise, and they drove *all the way* to Bourville, *about six miles*, without stopping again. Certainly the horse several times showed an inclination to turn aside from the road and draw up alongside of some *estaminet*, but a wild ‘Hu! donc’ from the driver, and a savage pull at the bit, prevented the beast each time from executing his project. The number of blows and oaths

showered on that bony beast was enormous. I expect the driver vented his disgust at not being able to get down for any more beer on the least dangerous creature he could.

Soon familiar land-marks began to be passed.

‘There’s Spinouile’s wind-mill,’ cried Philip; ‘and here’s the *Fossé aux Anglais*. We shall soon come to the carpenter’s who used to make our bows and arrows.’ He was quite joyous, and jumped from side to side of the omnibus to note each thing they passed with all the vivacity of a school-boy.

‘Hurrah! here we go over the Pont Tour-nant; the canal *is* muddy to-day. There’s old Dewintre’s shop, where we used to buy the *pain d’épices*, and I declare that Délobel’s looks just the same as when I got on the *Diligence* to go to Audruicq with mother years ago. By Jove! it only seems a few days ago, though. I declare I can see Madame Venne, the Doctor’s wife, looking through the blind of the window, just as she used to do in the old days.’

Adèle laughed, and became as gay and as joyous as Philip—although the stones jolted the *Voiture*, and shook their backbones in an alarming manner.

‘Here’s *l’Hôtel de Commerce*. Hallo! Where are we going now?’ cried Philip. ‘Oh, I forgot, the entrance in the Rue des Capucins.’ Here they stopped in the inn-yard of the *Hôtel du Nord*. Madame Miyier came to greet them—a kind pleasant woman. Adèle asked to be shown to a bed-room at once. Philip went in and had some cognac—then ran up-stairs to Adèle.

They had plenty of time to dress, and Philip had another laugh at the smallness of *all* the chamber utensils. *Table d’hôte* was ready as they went down, and they made a very nice dinner.

‘Where shall we go now?’ asked Philip, when it was all over.

‘Allons voir M. et Mme Venne,’ said Adèle.

No sooner said than agreed to. Philip tied his cravat with extra care, thereby suc-

ceeding in persuading it to go askew the very next minute; and Adèle was very particular in getting out the Indian shawl Philip had given her as a present from his mother. Together, and as usual arm-in-arm, they left the hotel, went by the Rue des Remparts down the Rue de Gravelines past Délobel's, whence the *Diligence* started for Audruicq, and rang at Doctor Venne's door.

'Oh! Mais!' cried the *vieille domestique*, 'c'est-il bien Mamzelle Adèle.'

'Mamzelle Adèle has abdicated in favour of Madame Darrell,' cried Philip before Adèle could say a word.

The Doctor and his wife were in, and came quickly to the *salon*. The Doctor Venne was a big man, with a stoop in his shoulders, and who had been an army surgeon. He looked as if he ate enormously, and drank in proportion. Philip was astonished at the difference between the Docteur Venne of his school-boy days and the present one. When M. Venne heard that Philip had been educated at M. De Brenne's school, and had recently passed

his examinations as surgeon, he instantly began a conversation thereupon with him. Philip gave him all the information he could, and astonished Docteur Venne by telling him that ordinary medical practitioners in his country were paid 3*s.* 6*d.* the visit, seldom less.

‘Eh ! Morbleu,’ said Venne, ‘on me paie la visite ici vingt et trente sous !’

Philip laughed at this, and attempted to show him how great a difference there was between the French and English style of living ; but all in vain. Docteur Venne seemed quite aggrieved to think that he, whilom *Chirurgien* of the *Grande Armée*, should only get twenty sous for a visit when a *bête d’Anglais* got seventy-two sous for the same thing. Madame Venne, who was principally remarkable for a *recherchée toilette* and a spasmodic twinkling of the eyes, had cornered Adèle and deluged her with questions.

‘Quoi ? Votre mari est toujours avec vous !’

‘But yes !’ said Adèle, blushing.

‘Mais je croyais que les Anglaises avaient tant de pruderie,’ cried Madame Venne.

Adèle at this blushed more than ever, for she had no great experience of married life as yet, and was quite at a loss what to say. Knowing as she did the ordinary style of married life among French *gens qui se respectent*, of separate beds, separate rooms, separate property, and all the rest of the artificiality of their system, it is easy to understand that Adèle should be puzzled. Rather amused with her confusion, Madame put the finishing touch to it by calling out to Philip with a malicious smile,

‘Eh, M. Darrell, voici qu’Adèle m’assure qu’elle n’aura plus d’amants.’

‘Madame,’ replied Philip, with a *nuance* of contempt in his tone, ‘Adèle est mariée.’ With this he rose to terminate his visit, inwardly thanking God that France and French life were *not* to be his portion.

The Docteur and Madame Venne accompanied them to the door, and they shook hands all round with much *empressement*.

Philip and Adèle had taken about twenty steps up the street when some one ran after

them and touched Philip on the shoulder. It was the Docteur, breathless and hatless.

‘ Ah, J’avais tout a fait oublié de vous prier de rester pour le souper. Nous le mangerons dans une demi heure.’

‘ Thanks,’ said Philip ; ‘ I would accept the invitation with pleasure, were it not that we have other visits to make.’

‘ A une autre fois, donc,’ cried Venne, and bowed and ran back to his wife.

‘ Hum ! ’ said Philip, ‘ that’s an invitation *à la mode de Bergues !* ’

It must here be remarked that in the North Department of France, the inhabitants of Bergues have the reputation of allowing their friends to *leave* the house first, then they run after them and invite them to go back and dine with them.

Adèle laughed, and looked up in Philip’s face with so loving a smile that he quite forgot the little vexatious incident, and actually bent down and kissed her. Although the Bourville streets are destitute of gas-lamps, and indeed of any kind of lamps, there was still

sufficient light for this action to be noticed and commented upon with the due amount of *horreur* such impropriety should cause, for two old Frenchwomen, married be it noted, simultaneously saw and blamed.

‘Jamais mon mari ne m’a embrassée dans la rue!’ said one.

‘C’est une horreur,’ cried the other, ‘mais je crois que ces gens-là sont des Anglais!’

Philip and Adèle did not hear or care one rap for the notice they excited, but quietly returned to the *Hôtel du Nord*, had some chocolate and rolls, and went off to bed quite tired out at half-past ten.

The next morning, after a breakfast of more chocolate and rolls, with an *omelette aux fines herbes*, Adèle proposed a visit to the Brelles, as she had heard from Madame Venne that her old school friend, Eugénie Brelle, was now in Bourville.

As they went through the streets, and crossed the Grand-place, Philip’s visible faculties were constantly excited by what he saw.

As a school-boy, all these things had given

him no idea of oddity for the simple reason that he did not know how to remark them. Now the blue blouses, and peaked caps, and the clatter of wooden shoes, that met him at every step, seemed very ridiculous.

It was Thursday, the *jour de marché*, and Philip took some pleasure in counting the vast numbers of people on the Place. He actually saw one group of *twenty* together at a time ; and certainly there must have been as many as seven hundred people altogether. Philip was certain that the crowds were much greater in Bourville when he was a boy.

The Place was paved with stones with rounded tops, most horrible to walk upon ; and tufts of grass sprang up at the foot of the walls of the houses that bordered it.

Altogether, Philip declared that he had never seen such dulness of life. The corn-merchants sold their corn in an impassive sort of way, without eagerness being displayed on either the part of the buyer or of the seller ; and all bargains were invariably clenched in a *cabaret* over a *chopine de bière* or a *petit verre*

de cognac. In fact, it may be said that every other house round the Place was a *cabaret*, opened expressly for the convenience of the market-people. Every one of them was the scene of noisy and many bargains ; and there were nearly as many men inside the *estaminets* as there were on the whole Place outside.

Brelle's place was filled with market-people when they got there ; so Philip suggested a walk out in the Campagne to have a look at the old school.

Philip wondered how it was he no longer had the same pleasure as of old, when he came to the blacksmith's forge, and the little grocery shop attached, where he had spent so much of his pocket-money in the old time. He even positively laughed to see the *forgeron* lead a horse into a species of open cage, formed by four upright posts, with a thick bar all round, and a species of pillory at the back. Into this pillory the horse's hoof was lifted, the bar shut down on it, the leg tied, the head chained to the front bar, and the animal buckled and barred up on three legs.

When everything was so fixed that the horse could neither kick nor move, the *forgeron* fetched his tools, and sat down on a little stool to take the old worn shoe off.

‘*Mon Dieu ! Que c’est bête !*’ said Philip, and moved on lest his laughter should be noticed by the worthy *forgeron*.

They soon came to the old house, and Philip gazed with some emotion on the battered Grand-porte. They had made the school into a farm again since De Brenne’s death, and when Philip opened the little door in the Grand-porte and peeped in he saw hens and turkeys strutting about on a fine manure heap that occupied the place of the old play-ground.

They walked a little way up the road by the side of the canal ; but Philip declared the water in it was awfully muddy, the Spanish poplars looked very bare, and the ditch by the roadside smelt horribly. They only went as far as the old bathing-place and turned back, Philip venting on the flat country, the muddy canal, the stinking ditch, and the place altogether the disappointment he felt.

Bourville was altered, or Philip was altered—one of the two. It is probable that the change occurred through Philip's returning to it with the boyish *souvenirs* of his school-days, and looking through a man's eyes, expected to see as he had seen as a boy. Adèle found it as dull as he did, and they mutually resolved to stay no longer than a fortnight.

In the evening they paid their visit to Mlle Brelle. Philip stayed outside waiting for Adèle. She presently came out and made him go in with her, as Mlle Brelle had desired to be presented to M. Darrell.

She was an ordinary kind of creature, dark and browned by the sun. Her conversation was commonplace, and Philip occasionally astonished her by his free speaking, and the stories he told her of English life. Adèle found her dull, and so cut her visit short. After that they went on to pay another visit, this time to a family Adèle and Philip both knew very well.

The Dufois family consisted of a mother and three daughters; they kept a species of

linen-draper's shop. M. Dufois had been the Vicomte Alphonse Dufois, but had *fait faillite* in a very disgraceful manner, and had since lived hidden in his wife's house, and only called himself Alphonse Dufois. His wife was the daughter of a Belgian Banker, and had been *très riche*, only her Vicomte of a husband spent all the money. Her daughters, Ida, Maria, and Julia, were nice girls, the youngest twenty-five, the eldest thirty-three. They were all exceedingly pleased to see Adèle and Philip.

Madame Dufois began a conversation with Philip, while the girls beset Adèle. The old lady asked Philip how long he had been married, and remarked that he could not have had time yet to know anything much about it. Did he like his wife? Yes. That was right; young husbands ought to like their wives. Here Philip ventured to ask whether she approved of the way people got married in England?

No, Madame did not approve of it. There was too much danger, too much liberty given

to young folks. She had heard very sad accounts of immorality among young English people. Why, she had actually been told that young people in England were allowed to *se voir* without the knowledge of their parents! That was quite *une horreur*! And more than that, she had heard—but would not believe it, it was too shocking—that actually the engaged couple were allowed to go about together, to travel together, and to sit together *alone* for hours at a time! Now was this really the truth?

Philip laughed heartily at the horror in the worthy old lady's face as he assured her that such was the fact. And he put a question, in his turn, which caused Madame to reflect before she gave her answer. Philip asked which she deemed the better, that girls should have lovers before marriage, or that wives should have them after marriage; which was the lesser evil?

Madame Dufois took time to think over this question, on which hangs the great difference between English and French life.

At last she said that it was really very difficult to answer properly such a question, unless one had an intimate knowledge of life in the two countries, and could have watched the good and evil arising out of each system.

‘Well,’ said Philip, and he spoke very earnestly, ‘I think no long intimacy with each mode of life necessary; the whole question turns on one point—is it more sinful to break a solemn vow than to break no vows at all?’

These words gave Madame Dufois a great respect for Philip, and she spoke afterwards to him with a certain *nuance* of deference to his opinions and views that quite charmed him. Madame was old, bent, brown-skinned, her nose and chin nearly met, her eyes alone were bright. Yet this unhandsome lady exerted so great a power by her delicate flattery, her just sense of appreciation, and the appearance of interest in her manner and in every tone of her voice, that Philip forgot her age in her sprightliness, her ugliness was effaced by her wit, her shallowness of view by the air of *bon sens* she spread over her words, and he left at

the end of his visit saying to Adèle that Madame Dufois was *charmante et spirituelle*, when she was simply a Frenchwoman of delicate tact.

Philip and Adèle became constant in their visits to the Dufois, and had many a conversation with them.

Philip was talking about books one day, and he asked Madame Dufois whether she had ever read '*le Juif Errant*' of Sue.

No! She had not read it through, as her confessor had told her not to read it, as it was a bad book written against Religion.

'Oh, what books did she usually read, then, if that class of work was interdicted?'

'Well, she had read, and still read with a great deal of pleasure, the novels of Paul de Kock. And now she was reading a History of Mademoiselle de la Vallière.'

'Ah, was not la Vallière a mistress of Louis XIV?'

'Yes! A very accomplished woman, but one who presumed too much on *l'amour du Grand Monarque*.'

Philip said nothing more about books, but turned to the daughters, and asked them if they played or sang much, as he saw the piano shut.

Yes! they did sing! Would they sing something?

Oh! Yes! Ida, you sing '*Il bacio*.'

Ida sat down to the piano, and *shouted* out '*Il bacio*' in French style. Her voice was a powerful soprano, but had not the slightest expression or inflexion in it. She sang loud, long, and correctly, that was all. Philip thanked her very much, but did not ask for another song, at which Ida seemed displeased.

The fortnight was drawing to a close, and Philip and Adèle had had a surfeit of Bourville; alone, neither of them could have stayed there three days, but as they lived every moment more and more in and for each other, the external world, after the first surprise, made little impression upon them.

They still had three days left of their holiday, when Philip received a letter from Mrs Heyson, bidding them return at once,

as Madame De Brenne had been missing for days, the trades-people were clamouring for money, and the whole house was turned topsy-turvy.

No sooner had Philip read this letter than he went to Mme Miyier, asked for his bill, and desired her to let him have a *Voiture* with two horses to take him to Calais in two hours' time.

Then Adèle and he went round to bid good-bye to their friends, assuring them that nothing but most urgent business could induce them to leave delightful Bourville so soon.

The *Voiture* was brought, the bill was sent in—a moderate one, only eighty-six francs for a fortnight's board and lodging—the bill was settled, and a compliment paid by Philip to Madame Miyier on her kind attention and the excellent order that reigned in her house. She kissed Adèle with a French vivacity of manner before helping her into the *Voiture*. Philip saw that all the luggage was safe, and off they started. They reached Calais in time

for the morning boat, and after a quick, calm passage reached Dover.

By some unfortunate mistake they lost the express train, and had to wait three hours before they could leave Dover. They quietly adjourned to the 'Ship' and had some dinner, which helped them over the time agreeably and profitably.

Of course Adèle was all the while in a perfect fever of anxiety, and Philip himself could not help feeling anxious as to what might have happened to Madame De Brenne. Besides, he knew that she held a certain power over Adèle's property, and there might be some litigation about it if she had died. He knew very well, for Adèle had told him, how much her fortune had dwindled. But Philip still could not help feeling a certain uneasiness that even with this deduction, Adèle's fortune would still be nearly five times as much as his. He even debated the propriety of settling the extra amount exclusively upon her, and after her to the children.

Neither of them ever dreamt of how much or of what Mme De Brenne was capable !

They even discussed in the train what they proposed to pay for the partnership in a practice, that Philip had set his mind on having. Adèle said that about £800 would be the proper sum.

Philip immediately proceeded to show her that such an amount was more than their means could warrant, and finally it was settled between them, that about six hundred pounds of their little fortune should be devoted to the object in question.

Whilst they talked, the train ran on, and soon the words 'Strood, Strood—Change for Maidstone' recalled them to the fact that their journey was near its end. They got out, ran down steps and up steps on to another platform, entered the Maidstone train, and in another half-hour were walking briskly up the London Road, leaving their luggage in the cloak-room, to be kept till sent for.

Ailsey Villa looked very gloomy and neglected as they approached it. The steps had

not been cleaned for days; the blinds were some drawn up, some half up, some down; one window of Madame's bed-room was half opened, and the little flower-beds in the front garden had begun to grow weeds. The standard rose in the middle bed was untrimmed, and the dead roses were dropping their petals one by one. The door was locked. A neighbour came out and told them Mrs Heyson had the keys. Adèle was kindly requested to rest herself in their house, whilst Philip walked to the Woodlands for them.

In about an hour he came back in Allen Heyson's pony-carriage. Allen was driving, and brought a message from his mother asking Adèle to go back with him to stay at the Woodlands, till Philip should find out where Madame was. She thanked Allen, but refused to go until she had been in the house with Philip. Jane was at the Woodlands waiting for Adèle.

The lock was rusted slightly, and creaked as the bolt shot back. The sound echoed through the silent house. A peculiar smell,

the odour of shut-up houses, assailed the nose as they entered. Everything was in confusion. On the table in the dining-room there was a decanter half full of wine, some plates of fruit, that had rotted, all covered with dust. In the kitchen, the tea-things were arranged on the tray; they could smell the sour milk in the jug as they entered.

Good God! how soon decay sets in when life has fled. The house was cold with damp, although the Autumn was not yet passed. Up-stairs the same confusion, the same order in disorder. The beds were left just as the servant and Madame had got out of them. In the cupboards were the evidences of Madame's terrible vice.

On her toilet-table a map was wide opened, and red ink-lines marked the roads that led to Dover. A livery stable-keeper's card was on the floor, by the toilet-table. Philip picked it up, folded the map, and put them in his pocket. He closed the window and fastened it, drew down the blinds, locked the cupboard door, locked the bed-room door, and then

went down to Adèle. She was waiting pale and trembling, she knew not from what cause. She looked at Philip inquiringly as he came down. The look said, 'Have you found out anything?' Philip nodded his head in the affirmative, and as he lifted her into the pony-carriage, said to her in a whisper,

'Don't be anxious, dear; I've found a clue!'

Allen looked on sorrowfully, mute witness of the grief of the woman he loved more than all the world.

When they got to the Woodlands, Mrs Heyson took Adèle in her arms and kissed her pale face tenderly and softly.

Philip asked Mr Heyson to go with him into the study. He closed the door, and taking the map and the livery stable-keeper's card from his pocket, showed them to him.

The red lines stopped at Dover. Philip had grasped a notion of Madame's plan the moment he saw the map. He explained it to Mr Heyson, who listened, was convinced, and asked Philip what he meant to do?

‘Go to this stable-keeper’s, ask whether Madame has hired a carriage from him, and if she have, I shall go after her.’

‘God of Heaven,’ cried Mr Heyson, ‘the woman must have been mad!’

‘Yes,’ said Philip, ‘she was! Mad from drink!’

CHAPTER V.

PHILIP AND ALLEN FIND MME DE BRENNE—DYING—A
QUIET FUNERAL WITH FEW MOURNERS—TERRIBLE RE-
VELATIONS FROM THE OLD TEAK DESK—MADAME'S
CRIME—PHILIP SETTLES DOWN IN MAIDSTONE.

WHEN Philip said what has been reported at the end of the last chapter, Mr Heyson sat down and whistled.

‘May I have your pony-trap?’ asked Philip.

‘It isn’t mine; it belongs to Allen,’ replied Mr Heyson; ‘I’ve no doubt he’ll lend it to you.’

Allen was in the hall. He readily acceded to Philip’s request, and begged to be allowed to accompany him in his search. He gave as his reason, that he knew every inch of the road to Dover. Brave, honest Allen, with true

heart ! Brave, honest lover, unable to possess the woman of his love, yet ever ready, ever anxious to aid and console her in this trouble, notwithstanding that every effort was directed to an end that would insure only the greater happiness of his happy rival.

His clear gray eyes showed his strong desire to be allowed to take part in this search after the missing woman. Philip caught at the earnest tone of voice in which he made his request, and grasped his hand with unfeigned joy. He was hurt that Allen only pressed his feebly in return.

After a hurried good-bye to Adèle the two men set off. Allen had changed the little carriage for a trap, lighter and easier for the pony to draw ; and the stout little animal set off at a good pace. They soon reached Wood Street, stopped at Syme's, the livery stables, and Philip jumped out. To his question as to whether Madame De Brenne had hired a carriage of him, he replied with an oath that she had, that it had not been sent back, and that he had sent his account for the horse and trap.

to Mr Heyson, and he concluded by saying, with a stronger oath than the first, that he didn't mean to be swindled. He was civil, however, directly Philip said that he would be responsible for the horse and trap, and volunteered some information.

From what he said it appeared that Madame had inquired how far it was to Canterbury. This decided Philip. He had often heard Adèle speak of her mother's inveterate dislike to railway travelling, and he easily understood how much this antipathy would be heightened by a semi-mad condition in which he had no doubt she had formed and carried into execution her strange project. Excepting in so far as to comprehend that Madame had set out for Dover, Philip could only guess that she might intend to go over to France. What design she might have formed was actually incomprehensible.

So Allen and Philip turned the horse's head and set off for Canterbury. They inquired on the road as to whether such a person as she had passed along that way, and easily

obtained the desired information. One man said the lady looked very much excited, and another told them that she bought a bottle of brandy of him.

At Canterbury they lost the scent, but driving straight through the town they picked it up again on the Dover Road. Indeed any one who once spoke to Mme De Brenne found it a difficult matter to forget her afterwards, consequently, as they inquired at every inn on the road, they at every one obtained some amount of information.

Madame seemed to have stopped at all, and at each one her excitement seemed to have increased. Poor wretched woman! who can tell what had prompted her to these strange actions?

Allen and Philip spoke but little during the journey, excepting of Madame De Brenne. Philip vaguely remembered Allen's emotion that evening in the garden, and his fine delicacy prompted him to speak of Adèle as little as possible. Allen seemed to divine his thought, and his manner grew gradually more-

frank and friendly as the time they passed together grew longer.

Night came and found them still at their search, so they put up at an inn two miles from Canterbury. Here they acquired fresh knowledge. For Madame De Brenne had stopped two hours there, and afterwards had taken the road to Dover that passed by Denton. So the next morning early they set out again.

The hops were beginning to turn straw colour and their beautiful aroma filled the air. Here and there local hop-pickers were at work. The sun was still warm in the early morning, and Mother Earth wore a beautiful Autumn dress. A wood they passed showed a few brown leaf patches in the trees, and the red ash-berries flashed brightly as they passed them. The world is very beautiful and was formed for man's happiness. How sad it is to see man always frustrating the evident designs of God.

Philip and Allen felt braced by the sweet clear atmosphere, and the pony shook his mane

joyously as he ran along. Occasionally a lark flew up from a wheat-field, for there was corn still standing, and the pure song trilled on the balmy air like Nature's song of praise. They passed a donkey browsing peaceably by the road-side, and pulled up to ask a rough-looking youth who was there minding it, whether he had seen a person of Mme De Brenne's description.

The youth said he hadn't, but that last night there was a lady taken ill at Denton, and staying at the 'Ploughshare.'

Philip flung the boy a sixpence, and Allen shook the reins about the pony's head, who seemed to understand what that meant, for he set off at once at a quick trot. A straggling sort of village was presently reached. First came an outlying farm, then a house by itself, and after that three or four houses together. Soon a big sign-board caught their attention. It bore on it a picture of a plough. Allen drove to it and drew up. Philip jumped down, ran into the inn, and asked for the landlord. He came at once, a big,

fair-haired man, true descendant of the Saxons.

In a few words Philip told him the object of his visit.

‘Missus!’ shouted the man, ‘come here.’

He led Philip into the private tap-room. The landlady joined them almost immediately. Her husband said simply—

‘The gentleman’s come about the lady in the front bed-room.’

The landlady turned a sympathetic look to Philip.

‘Ah, sir!’ said she, ‘I’m afraid you’re too late!’

‘Too late!’ cried Philip. ‘In what way? Is she dead?’

‘No, sir! But I fear she is dying!’ said the landlady.

Philip started up, went out to Allen, told him in a few words what he had learned. Allen said nothing, he just nodded his head, and took the pony and trap round to the stable, had them put up, and quietly returned to join Philip in the inn.

As he entered the tap-room, Philip was asking whether he might not go up to see this lady, for from the description they gave him he did not for a moment doubt that it was Mme De Brenne. When he added that he was a doctor as well as a relation, the landlady said he might just as well go up as not.

‘Will you come with me?’ said Philip.

‘Oh, certainly, if you wish it,’ she replied.

So together they went up. The landlady knocked at the door.

‘Come in!’ cried a woman’s voice. It was not Mme De Brenne’s voice.

‘That is not the voice of the person I am seeking,’ said Philip.

‘No, sir! I wish she could speak as loud as that. It is a woman who is taking care of her!’

They opened the door, and following the landlady, Philip went in.

The room was only half lighted, for the blinds were drawn down and the shutters half closed. There was a smell of vinegar and

camphor, mingling with that indescribable foetor that always hangs about a sick chamber.

‘This way, sir,’ said the woman, fancying Philip was the doctor. Philip advanced.

On a wide long bed, shaded by clean white curtains, lay Mme De Brenne. In spite of the obscurity of the room, Philip recognized her at once. He took her hand in his to feel the pulse. It was feeble and thin, and Philip counted fifty-two beats to the minute. The hand and arm were cold and clammy.

‘Will you open the shutter, Nurse?’

‘Yes, sir!’ The shutter was pushed back. It was still obscure in the room.

‘Draw the blind up a little, please,’ said Philip.

Then he saw the terrible ravage in the poor woman’s face, changed and degraded from the effects of fiery drink—pinched and gray from deadly sickness—closed eyes, with a dark swollen circle round them—closed livid lips, cracked and parched—and iron gray hair falling in confusion over the forehead!

Oh, horrible ! most horrible and loathsome to look upon ! The most repulsive aspect [that could be thrust before human eyes, by the grim masker Death !

Philip sat by the bed-side, holding her hand and mechanically counting the lessening beats of the pulse, and looking at Mme De Brenne with a feeling of horrible sympathy.

There came a sound of footsteps on the stairs. Then a knock at the door. The nurse, who had seen her mistake as to Philip as soon as the shutter was thrown back, exclaimed—

‘ Here’s the doctor at last ! ’ and went to open the door. A little thin, fair man bustled into the room, and through his nose cried—

‘ I say ! There’s too much light ! I say, Ma’am— ’ and stopped, seeing Philip seated by the bed-side, holding Madame’s hand in his.

Philip laid the hand gently on the bed and stood up, and bowed interrogatively.

‘ Oh,—Doctor Wheek ! ’ said the little fair man.

Philip bowed, and said in the same tone, 'Doctor Darrell.' Another exchange of bows.

'Can I speak with you a moment privately?' said Philip.

'I say, with pleasure. Certainly, I say certainly,' replied Doctor Wheek.

'Need we stay for the moment, sir?' asked the nurse.

'I say! you're quite right, ma'am. I say you need not stop at all whilst Doctor ——'

'Darrell,' said Philip.

'Whilst Doctor Darrell and I are here.'

The landlady and nurse went out. Doctor Wheek and Philip sat down at the further end of the large room.

'Your patient is dying, Doctor,' said Philip.

The little man gave a jump and ran hurriedly to the bed-side, took the hand, felt the pulse, listened to the difficult breathing, and shook his head dolefully as he came back to Philip.

'I say! I think quite as you say—the poor woman, I say, is very bad!'

‘What has been the matter with her?’ asked Philip.

Doctor Wheek hesitated for a moment, before he blurted out the truth. It was so disgusting that even he did not seem to care much about saying the words.

What he said was this :

‘Cholera ! I say ! Brought on by drink and exposure to wet and cold. She can’t keep anything in the stomach—I say the stomach’s in holes—burnt up. It’s horrible, I say, to think about.’

‘Do you know how she came here?’ asked Philip.

‘No ! I don’t ! I say, landlady’ll be able to tell you.’

‘True !’ said Philip ; ‘I did not think of asking her.’

‘I say ! shall I call her up—eh?’ said Doctor Wheek.

‘Never mind just now, it really matters but very little how she got here. I feel certain that she will die here,’ replied Philip.

They went together to the bed-side again,

and Philip took her hand a second time. As he did so, Madame opened her eyes and looked at him. She did not recognize him. Suddenly she started up and got out of bed. As she did so, she fell against the bed, her legs bent, and she was on her knees, with her hands clasped.

Philip sprang forward to help her. She made no movement, only her eyes stared full at him; then with a loud scream she called out, 'Philip! Oh God!' and her head sank on the bed.

Philip imagined that shame made her hide her face from him. He waited a few moments. Doctor Wheek touched Madame's arm, shook it—took her hand, shook it—she made no sign. He lifted the head up, and let it go again. It fell again on the bed.

Philip said, 'She is dead.'

'Yes,' muttered Doctor Wheek, 'she is.'

Philip went to the top of the stairs and called the nurse. She came up at once.

'The lady is dead. Will you kindly see to her?' said he.

The nurse came forward as Doctor Wheek and Philip left the room.

Allen was waiting, sadly and patiently.

‘Madame is dead,’ said Philip.

‘Poor woman!’ cried Allen. Then went out and walked up the road. He was thinking of Adèle.

Philip despatched a man with a letter for Adèle. There was no office and no station near whence he could send a message, so he sent this man on horseback with a short letter. He passed Allen on the road.

‘Where are you going?’ shouted Allen.

‘To Maidstone, sir, with a letter for Mrs Darrell,’ replied the man, who recognized him as the gentleman who came with Mr Darrell. And off he went again at a sharp trot.

Allen turned back to the ‘Ploughshare,’ and found Philip talking to the landlady. From what she said it appeared that Madame De Brenne arrived there the previous night, dirty from head to foot with mud, and half conscious only of what she was doing.

She said she had been thrown from her carriage, and as she showed them that she had plenty of money, they made no objections to taking her in. They obtained from her a description of the carriage and horse, and sending a man after it, it was found at an inn two miles from Canterbury, where it was left, as the wheel was smashed.

The same evening that she came she ordered a bottle of brandy, and when the servant took her up some supper, the bottle was on the table half emptied. In the night they were alarmed by groans and cries that came from her room. The servant went up, and Madame was nearly insensible. They at once sent for their doctor. When he came he ordered the brandy to be taken away, and on examination—for Madame would not, or could not, speak—he found that she was suffering from cholera. The poor lady suffered so, more and more, notwithstanding the remedies Doctor Wheek has used. When she was sensible, she always called for brandy. They

had not given her any by the doctor's orders. That was all. 'You know the rest, sir,' concluded the woman.

Doctor Wheek wrote the certificate at Philip's request. The causes of death were—
Alcoholism. Time unknown.

English Cholera. Ten hours.

Madame De Brenne was forty-nine years of age. Philip, the same day, went about the business of the funeral in so impassive a manner, that Allen looked on with unfeigned astonishment. Philip had not uttered a word of commiseration, not a word of sympathy, not a word of pity. Allen watched him and went with him everywhere. Allen's thoughts always went back to the sweet girlish face that had been uplifted to his as he shook hands before starting on this journey. He always heard the soft voice saying, 'Try to find mamma!' and he grieved, not for Madame De Brenne, but for Adèle; and he was angry that Philip showed no signs of grief as he did.

Oh! what a dismal work it is, ordering

and agreeing on the price to be paid, for the coffin, for the hearse, for the carriages, for the mourners. Miserable mockery of woe !

When everything was done, Philip and Allen walked back to the inn. A bed-room and sitting-room had been prepared for them. They went up-stairs. Philip sat down by a table. His head bent over, he leant his arms on the table, and hid his face—then sobbed so loudly, so piteously, that Allen started up to offer him words of consolation, but refrained, because he thought it best that sorrow should have its fling.

Philip hardly knew, perhaps, why he wept so bitterly. So many emotions mingled and produced his grief that it would have been impossible to analyze them. Presently he looked up and wiped the tears from his eyes and face.

‘ I couldn’t help it, old fellow,’ he cried to Allen. ‘ I felt quite ill.’

Allen made some answer, but Philip did not hear it. He was looking straight before him. The landlady sent the servant up to

ask them whether they would like some dinner. Allen went out and ordered some, and brought up at the same time a bottle of sherry. He poured some into a tumbler, and gave it to Philip, telling him that he ought, for Adèle's sake, to drink it, lest he should fall ill. God knows how much it cost Allen of effort to say this—'for Adèle's sake.' Philip drank the wine, and was certainly better for it. The dinner came up, some chops and vegetables. The two friends sat down to it. Everything was nicely cooked, the vegetables were fresh cut, the potatoes well boiled. Without thinking of it, perhaps, both made a good meal, and felt less sorrowful after it. A fruit-tart tempted them, and with wine they managed to dispose of it between them. It must be remembered that they had made a very early breakfast, and that it was four o'clock before they sat down to their dinner.

'Adèle will get my letter about tea-time,' said Philip. 'How I wish I was with her!'

Allen said nothing. Every word Philip uttered that reminded him of Adèle struck

him like a dagger-thrust. He was less strong than he imagined.

They waited patiently, they knew not for what, only both seemed to expect something. About five o'clock it began to rain, and so they could not walk out, and were obliged to sit reading what books the inn-library boasted. It was very dreary and very wearisome. Every minute passed as if it had been an hour. Philip shivered now and then. Allen went to sleep. At nine they had a tea supper. Whilst they were eating, a rattle of wheels sounded from the road, and a carriage stopped at the inn. Philip and Allen both started up. Philip went to the door. Adèle was speaking in the passage to the landlady. Philip ran down-stairs to her, and she clung to him uttering mingled cries of grief and joy.

‘Come up-stairs, dear,’ said Philip.

When Adèle saw Allen she went to him. Allen held out his hand, she took it, but at the same moment threw her arms round his neck and kissed him.

Allen's face turned red, and tears came into his eyes. Then he left the room.

'Oh, Philip! Is Mamma really dead?' cried Adèle, as soon as they were alone.

'Yes, darling! Poor child! you must not cry, dear. Adèle, don't cry! It was all for the best,' said Philip. That did not stop her tears.

She lay in Philip's arms, her head on his shoulder, and wept. Soon her sobs ceased, and looking down at her face, Philip saw that she had gone to sleep. He carried her in his arms to the bed-room and laid her on the bed, throwing a part of the counterpane over her, lest she should catch cold. She had opened her eyes as he put her there, and Philip sat by the bedside till she quietly went to sleep again. The events of the last three days had quite exhausted her.

Two days after this, Madame was buried in the little churchyard. All was very simple and very quiet. Adèle, Philip, and Allen followed the hearse, in a coach. They were

the only persons, besides the clergyman, the clerk, and the grave-digger, who stood by the grave. It was a cold raw day, and as the burial service came to its conclusion the rain began to fall—a soaking, drizzling rain that chilled one to the bone. Philip looked back, as he was the last to leave the churchyard, and saw the sexton shovelling in the earth with great haste. He wanted to get away out of the rain. All three felt greatly relieved when it was over, for the days had passed so slowly and drearily.

Philip hired a carriage to take them back to Maidstone, and after paying all the bills he found he had spent forty-five pounds. They stopped at the inn where the carriage and horse had been left. The wheel had been replaced by a wheelwright from Canterbury, and a man took charge of it and drove it the next day to Maidstone and delivered it to Mr Symes.

It was evening when the party drove up to the Woodlands. A hearty loving welcome

was awaiting them. Adèle sat by Mrs Heyson till they all went to bed. Philip and Allen said very little.

In the morning Mr Heyson and Philip went over to Ailsey Villa. In his presence Philip searched the house, collected together all the wines and spirits in one cupboard. Then he opened the teak-wood desk that had belonged to M. De Brenne's brother, and which had been bequeathed by him to Adèle. The first thing that they found was a bundle of Bank of England *paid* drafts, that is, the receipts for stock sold. There were twenty-nine drafts. Philip dotted down the amounts. When he added them up, the total was £2750. Some of the drafts were for £50, some for £100. Sometimes three had been drawn in one year !

‘ Good God,’ cried Mr Heyson, as Philip showed him the total, ‘ how ever can this money have been spent ? ’

Philip said nothing, only continued his search. He found a bundle of receipted bills. He turned them over. They were all

from one person. John Franks, Wine and Spirit Merchant, Maidstone, was the heading to every one of them. He counted them carefully one by one. There were seventeen of them. The amounts varied from £12 to £30, and all showed one peculiarity—they were paid at quarter days, as the dates proved. Mr Heyson took them from Philip, and said he would count up the amounts. Philip continued his search, but found nothing else, only a big envelope full of certificates of Marriage, Baptism, and Death.

‘I can’t find anything else,’ said Philip.
‘How much do the wine-bills come to?’

‘Wait a moment, please,’ said Mr Heyson, and went over his calculations again.

‘I make the amount £407,’ said Mr Heyson. ‘It is something monstrous!’

Philip echoed, ‘Monstrous!’

‘Why, how much would be spent here for three people a year?’ cried Mr Heyson.

‘I should be afraid to give any opinion on that point,’ said Philip. ‘Perhaps we may learn that from Adèle, or there may be the

butcher's, the baker's, the grocer's books somewhere in the house.'

In fact they found the trades-people's books in the kitchen dresser-drawer, and by taking an average from the receipts, managed to make out that the house expenses had been three hundred and odd pounds a year.

The rent was £30, taxes and rates £7. That is, for the four years Madame had lived in the house, about £148. They calculated, by sheer guess-work, that Madame had earned £50 on an average every year, that made £200 for the four years. Philip drew up a table of contrasted receipts and expenses, as he called it, and it was pretty much as follows :—

	£		£
Cash from the Bank	. 2750	House expenses 4 years	
Interest (?) 200	at each £300 1200
Private Pupils 200	Rent and Taxes 148
		Wine Bills 407
		Adèle's Pocket-money,	
		Dresses, &c. (?) 100
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	£3150		£1855
	1855		
	<hr/>		
	£1295		

The balance left puzzled them exceedingly.

‘One thing I cannot understand,’ said Mr Heyson. ‘It is this. Why did Madame commit all these follies and vices? She always seemed such a good mother. Why, just think of the trouble she took to find out all about your position, &c., when you were courting Adèle.’

‘That is exactly the explanation of her conduct,’ replied Philip. ‘She fancied that as Adèle would be certain of a protector, whatever happened, it was no longer necessary for her to restrain her vicious habits. I am only astonished and sorry that she should have shown herself to the end so thorough a hypocrite! I loved Madame very dearly at one time.’

‘Well! Well! I believe your idea is correct. Still I should like to find out about this money,’ said Mr Heyson.

For a long time they searched their brains for some conceivable reason to explain the discrepancy. They added up again the wine-bills, the drafts, always with the same result. Suddenly Philip cried—

‘Eureka, Eureka! Here’s the explanation!’ and he pointed with his finger to the date of one of the bank drafts. It had been drawn eight years before—and was for £100. Another of the same year, was for a similar sum.

‘Now I understand it all,’ cried Mr Heyson. ‘That is the reason why Madame used to pay periodical visits to England. She came to draw out her unfortunate child’s money.’

‘But how can that be?’ said Philip. ‘I did not know Adèle had any money until after her father’s death.’

‘Didn’t she inherit about £1500 from her uncle? Well, he died nearly five years before her father did, and the extra amount must have been drawn out during M. De Brenne’s lifetime. I wonder whether he knew it. But let’s see whether this idea is proved by the Bank cheques.’

They looked through them again accordingly, and found that over £900 had been drawn out from the Bank previous to the time of the arrival of Madame at Maidstone. Still

that left a sum of over £300 to be accounted for. They both gave the task up in despair. Philip begged Mr Heyson not to say anything to Adèle about this terrible affair, and he burnt the receipts from the wine-merchant in the flame of a candle. He locked up the desk and the house, and together they walked back to the Woodlands to dinner.

After dinner Philip asked Adèle whether she remembered how much money she had drawn out from the bank. As far as she could recollect she fancied it was about £800. Philip said nothing about it. Some days after this, however, he carefully examined the signatures to the drafts. *They did not all tally!* Sometimes the discrepancy was too great to be accidental, and Philip came to the decided conclusion that Madame De Brenne must have systematically forged her daughter's signature!

His mind almost recoiled with horror from the inevitable conclusion. Yet he could arrive at no other.

As he anticipated, upon paying a visit to

the brokers who had transacted all Madame's business on 'Change, he simply found a balance of £270 remaining in Adèle's name. This was fully explicable by the fact that the monies had been sold out at different times, and of course at different prices.

Philip showed them cause why only his signature should be recognized in the future, proving Madame De Brenne's death and his marriage with Adèle. In consequence the stock was transferred from Adèle De Brenne to Philip Darrell.

A few weeks after Madame's funeral Philip purchased a partnership in a Maidstone practice, paying for it £350, with the understanding that he should act as junior partner, and receive a share amounting to not less than £150 per annum, for which he gave his services to the benefit of the firm.

So Philip and Adèle really began now the real experience of life. An obstacle that might have retarded their onward march had been removed by Madame's death.

Philip was strong, energetic, and keenly

fond of his profession. He was handsome enough, or rather his expression was to please the women, and he was homely enough in his manners not to give umbrage to the men. Besides this, he spoke and acted always like a gentleman, although he did not walk nor bow with the grace of a dancing-master.

They took a small house opposite Mr Griffith's, and had a large brass plate screwed on the railings with the pleasant inscription of Messrs Griffith & Darrell, Surgeons.

Philip's cup of happiness seemed full. He did not notice the dregs at the bottom of the cup, or dream that ever a day could come when the draught should turn as bitter as the sip from a quassia wood goblet.

God's mercy only allows man to see and feel the bitterness of his past and his present. The future is hidden behind an impenetrable veil. Man always hopes that nothing but happiness may greet him in the days that are to come.

CHAPTER VI.

A MOTHER'S LOVE SUPPLIES A BLOOD-HOUND'S INSTINCT—
THE SCENT GROWS HOT, AND JUSTICE STEPS IN TO CLAIM
ITS OWN — JOHN WRIGHT FLEES FROM THE LAW — A
GLIMPSE OF A WELL-KNOWN FACE ARRESTS HIS FOOTSTEPS
— 'DIDN'T I KILL HIM, THEN?'

MRS WRIGHT had waited day after day, week after week, month after month, yet never heard more of her husband or of her daughter. One blow had deprived her of both. All she had to cherish had been taken from her home—husband, child! Only there lurked in her heart a profound feeling of hatred, gnawing and corroding her soul, and sometimes making her nearly mad. She felt convinced now that she should never see Kate again, and she was equally convinced that it was her husband who had killed her.

She waited and waited for the Law to trace, discover, and punish the crime. The old placards were still on the fences, but tattered, torn, and soddened in rain and mud, so that they were now hardly legible.

She waited in vain.

At last the boiling, seething emotions within her heart spread from it through her soul and brain, and the feelings that had only been love and hatred now faded and merged into something higher and yet lower than both. But so strong that it created new powers of body and brain in this poor half-crazed mother, who hitherto had spent her life in a dull round of daily domestic work.

When the brain quickens, everything in our past life returns with redoubled power. Things we thought forgotten are remembered with terrible distinctness and present themselves to our altered vision with different aspect, and to our altered brain with different meaning. We had begun to think, now we invent !

To this poor woman, with rough, coarse

features, harsh hair, and a poverty degraded strength, came all this new life and new power; came when the old life was dead and buried; came when there was nothing left on earth to her but suffering; came when love was buried in the grave of the dead life, the love that eased and soothed her suffering before, and sometimes rendered suffering exquisite happiness, because such sweet love came to soothe it.

Poor woman! poor wife! poor mother!

She had loved her Katie so dearly, the only child God had spared to her of many. She had loved her husband, but never with so great a love as she had lavished on her child. Now she had lost both. She was no more a mother, no more a wife. Only the woman, full of bereavement, remained.

At last, unable to stay inactive any longer, Mrs Wright, one morning in September, trudged over the heather hills, through the pine wood, to the house of the magistrate to whom she had made her accusation against her husband. Dead leaves, crisp, still, and

brown, yielded crumpingly under her feet as she walked along the path, and the wind rustling through the trees brought a fresh leaf to the ground now and then, as the excited woman walked on. The pine wood sent its fragrance round her, and the heather-bells rustled against her dress; but she noticed nothing, saw nothing, smelt nothing, heard nothing, only walked on.

The magistrate was in when she reached the house, and she was ushered into his study. He was a kindly man, old and calm-eyed from long-tempered patience. He first asked her to be seated, then on what business she came.

‘You don’t remember me, your worship,’ said Mrs Wright, ‘but I know your kind face well. It’s months ago since I was here, and when I was, I came about Katie Wright’s murder.’

‘Ha, I remember you now!’ cried the magistrate. ‘You are the mother, are you not?’

‘Yes, sir; I’m her mother, and I’ve waited very patiently, but no one seems to care about

finding John Wright. I do ! and as I cannot have my Katie again, I'll have him !' Her excitement was intense ; one cannot render the nervous quivering of her voice, and she got up from her chair and came close to the magistrate. 'She was very dear to me, and he killed her ! She loved me—he killed her ! She was dearly fond of him, but he killed her ! And I've sworn to God that I'll kill him !'

'Tush, tush, my good woman,' began the magistrate.

'Good woman won't do for me !' cried she ; 'I'm not a good woman. I was once, but that was before John Wright killed my child. I've nobody to care about now, nothing to do but to find John Wright.'

She went and sat down again, and with a nervous movement wrapped her scrap of shawl closer round her thin body.

The magistrate looked at her for a few moments and nibbled the end of a quill pen. He had noticed that the woman had only spoken of her husband as 'John Wright,' and

the accent of intense hatred that made her voice quiver every time she uttered his name. He was just as much persuaded as the poor woman of the truth of her accusation. And he actually was puzzled to know what to do for her.

Suddenly she got up again and came to him quickly, and put her hand on his arm. Her gleaming eyes fixed on his as in a species of fascination. Her will was more concentrated than his.

‘Will you send me after him?’ she asked.

‘Send you after him? Where to?’ said the magistrate.

‘To London,’ answered Mrs Wright.

‘How do you know he’s gone there?’ asked he.

‘I know that he is, because the gentleman who was with Kate belongs there. I’ve been told that the gentleman was staying at Mr Horley’s, and went back to London the day Katie was killed. And I know John Wright has gone there too after him.’

‘But how do you know that?’ asked the magistrate.

‘It’s here,’ said Mrs Wright, pressing her hand to her head. ‘It burns me all day and all night long. And I must go to London, or I shall never be able to kill John Wright.’

The magistrate could not help staring at her as she said the words, ‘I shall never be able to kill John Wright!’ for the voice was now wonderfully quiet and calm.

Totally puzzled as to what he should do, he at last told Mrs Wright to come again the next day, as he would like to confer with a brother magistrate upon the matter.

Mrs Wright looked full at him for a few moments, plainly saw the indecision marked on his face, and perhaps read in it his wish to put her off her enterprise, for she turned at once, walked to the door, opened it, looked back at the magistrate, and said—

‘I’ll go find John Wright in London, as I see you will not help me; I’ll do it all alone.’

She slammed the door behind her, and

walked along the passage, threw open the street door—which she forgot to close—and in another minute was in the road on her way to Mr Horley's house, at Shirley village. The wretched woman hurried on, staggering as if about to fall, and obliged to stop occasionally to rally her strength. But the one set purpose of her life now kept her up. She found Mr Horley at home, and by means of a falsehood, ascertained that the gentleman who had been seen with Katie in the wood was named Tom Darrell, that he was living in London, and that his place of business was at John Allerton & Co.'s, 49, Cheapside.

She thanked Mr Horley for his kindness, and went back to the village, down the hill, along the dusty road, till she reached Croydon. She knew the railway station well, and soon had taken a ticket for London. At half past twelve P.M. she was walking over London Bridge, asking her way to Cheapside. Then when she reached Cheapside, she asked for No. 49, and when that was pointed out to her she went in, ascertained that it was

Messrs Allerton's, and inquired for Mr Tom Darrell.

They told her that Mr Darrell was absent, but gave her his address in Little Ryder Street, and pointed out the direction to her. But as she walked on she forgot the way, and wandered up Newgate Street and Holborn, feeling very tired and hungry. She went into an eating-house and had some dinner, for which she paid eleven pence half-penny ; they gave her a plate of meat, with vegetables and bread. She drank water with her food, and the meal and the rest did her good. She felt strong again and clear-headed.

So she walked on. Presently she noticed a man leaning in a corner of a wall, looking intently before him. She followed the direction of his look, and saw a baker's shop on the opposite side of the road. When she got nearer to the man she stopped, uttering a suppressed cry, either of joy or of pain. Then she went right up to him and clutched his arm. Her grip must have been hard, for the man cried out, and pulled his arm away ;

then looked round, saw the woman, and his face became ashen gray. He turned to flee from her, but she seized his arm again, and hissed between her teeth.

‘I’ve found you at last, John Wright!’

Every word, though low, was distinct and clear.

A short dark man, who had stopped close to them when Mrs Wright took hold of her husband, heard the words and whipped a big pocket-book out of his pocket, opened it, unfolded a large bill, printed with big black letters, and read it through, looking at John Wright from time to time.

‘That’s the fellow!’ he muttered, and turning to Mrs Wright, said aloud—

‘What’s this man done to you, Ma’am?’

The woman looked at him and answered savagely, ‘He is my husband, and he killed my girl Katie Wright.’

‘Then he is John Wright, and I’ve a warrant to arrest him,’ said the short dark man. He put forth his hand to seize his prisoner, but with an effort and a savage oath

John Wright shook off his wife's grasp and darted away.

The Detective, for such was the short dark man's vocation, ran after, shouting, 'Stop the Murderer.' But few attempted to stop John Wright, he looked so savage and determined. A policeman threw himself before him, but Wright felled him to the pavement with a single blow. Then he darted up a narrow court, and doubling upon his pursuer, ran down through Seven Dials and St Martin's Lane, past the Horse-guards. Here he suddenly stopped at the sight of a man standing by Whitehall. A shiver ran through him, and he stamped his foot on the ground. He knew the man, and needed no second glance to recognize Tom Darrell. Alive and well! Alive and looking happy, whilst he, John Wright, was a miserable hunted wretch.

'Didn't I kill him, then?' cried he, and ground his teeth together at the thought.

If Tom Darrell was alive, Katie must be somewhere near him; for John Wright knew nothing of what had happened after he had struck down his enemy in Epping Wood.

The thought that Tom was still living, and still enjoying his daughter's love, was a knife-stab to this poor wretch. He forgot that the Law had found him, recognized him, and was pursuing him as his own daughter's murderer. He forgot his wife, and that the angry hatred that gleamed from her eyes had blanched his face with a strange terror. He only remembered that all his misery, all his toil, all his patience, had led to nothing, and that his revenge was yet unsatisfied. He closed his eyes once, and with his hand struck the air heavily, cursing as he did so; perhaps rehearsing the blows he had struck in Epping Wood.

He no longer knew what to do. He felt vaguely that he was pursued, and that his own safety urged him to go away from London. But after seeing his daughter's seducer alive, and apparently unharmed, he forgot all this, and determined to watch him again, to dog his footsteps, and seize a heavier stick the next time he got his chance, and to strike then with a heavier hand.

Tom Darrell, perfectly unconscious of John Wright's proximity to him, after a while walked quietly away towards Pall Mall.

John Wright followed him at a short distance, and followed him till he saw him let himself in with his latch-key to his lodgings in Little Ryder Street.

But as he was watching, a hand grasped his shoulder, and a voice called out, 'You are my prisoner.'

Wright started, wrenched himself free, turned and recognized the short man, who had tried to arrest him in Holborn.

'Damn you !' he cried. 'Take that,' and struck him so violently on the head, that the Detective was instantly floored. Then he fled.

A voice behind him always seemed to be following and shrieking in his ear 'murderer.' He was utterly bewildered. He felt certain that he had not killed Tom Darrell, since he had just seen him walking in the street. Suddenly he remembered what his wife had said — 'He is my husband, and he killed my girl Katie Wright,' and he staggered forward,

almost falling to the ground at a horrible idea that crossed his brain—‘ Could I have killed Katie, and not him ? ’

He remembered that it was almost dark in the wood, and that Katie was very near her lover when he had struck those terrible blows, and hearing a body fall, had rushed away, terror and conscience stricken.

The idea staggered him at first ; then he thought of his wife, and felt certain that he must have killed Katie instead of her seducer, else why should she accuse him of it ? He never once remembered that his wife had asked him the night when Katie disappeared at Shirley, ‘ Where is Katie ? What have you done with her ? ’ He only thought of the recent facts of his life. And he rushed on faster. He had left the Town behind, and was running along a country road, without knowing or caring where it might lead to, so that it took him away from London.

CHAPTER VII.

PHILIP AND ADÈLE AT MAIDSTONE—CARES OF HOUSE-KEEPING—ADÈLE'S DEFICIENCIES — PHILIP'S IMPATIENCE—LITTLE EVILS HARDER TO BEAR THAN GREAT SORROWS—AN APPLICANT PRESENTS HIMSELF FOR WORK—JOHN WRIGHT IS MADE GARDENER AT MR GRIFFITH'S.

A FEW weeks have passed since Adèle and Philip betook themselves to their little house. Already Adèle began to scold Philip, very gently, however, as yet, for his want of punctuality.

‘Why can’t you come in to dinner, dear, at the proper time?’ would Adèle say.

‘Because it is next to impossible always to get one’s round over in time,’ replies Philip.

The other meals were treated in just the same way, and Adèle despaired of ever being comfortable. Philip was very loving when-

ever he could find a spare moment for such sweet pastime; but his patients were poor, and he had to make up by quantity for the quality. Consequently he was at work early and late. Before breakfast, during the two weeks that had passed, Philip had been busy fitting up a wee bit of a surgery in a small room at the back of the house. Then of course he swallowed his breakfast very quickly, as he had to go over to the surgery at Mr Griffith's and see to the repetitions of medicines required for the day. So Adèle got few kisses and caresses, and only could find consolation in the fact that the kisses were sweeter almost than before, and the caresses, if hurried, were very loving.

Still, when Philip was out on his daily round Adèle had great difficulty in whiling away the time. Poor child! Her mother had so kept her down, and been so great a refuge for her want of knowledge to take shelter in, that Adèle felt quite lost without her. And it was hardly to be expected that she should so soon be able to find Philip all

in all to her; besides that, he was seldom at home, but for short intervals at a time, and it always happened that Adèle most needed his advice and help when he was not there to give them. While Philip was with her, she never seemed to want anything, or to be in any way at fault.

Adèle, as Philip discovered, cared very little for needle-work, knew but little about domestic matters, and was not a *Soyer* in matters culinary. As to the management of a servant, and the regulation of the household expenses, she had found herself completely non-plussed. It is also very doubtful whether she could tell the difference between a leg of mutton and a leg of lamb; and on one occasion her *naïve* ignorance made Philip laugh very heartily. He had asked her to make some beef-tea for one of his poor patients, and told her to send to the butcher's for half a pound of shin of beef. When he came home at dinner-time he asked whether the beef-tea was made.

‘No, dear,’ replied Adèle; ‘I did not like

to make it till you came, for I was not sure whether they had sent the right meat.'

'Oh, let me see it,' said Philip.

Adèle brought the piece of shin of beef from a cupboard and showed it him.

'That's all right, my dear! A beautiful piece!' said Philip.

'But is it shin of beef?' asked Adèle.

'Of course it is! why do you ask, *petite*?'

'Why, because it isn't like *my* shin! mine is all bony and hard,' said Adèle.

'That's right enough, you simple little morsel,' said Philip, laughing, 'but you must remember you're not an ox.'

Philip laughed and chuckled many times that day over the famous 'shin' question, and was so much amused by the *naïveté* of the inquiry that he did not think of the terrible ignorance that it showed.

The first week of their house-keeping had given rise to a little disagreeable incident; for when Philip came to add up the amounts of the bills, he found that the total came to a larger sum than they could afford. How-

ever he said very little, only pointing out to Adèle the extra income they would require to live at that rate. Adèle promised to be more careful. And the following week she racked her brains for means of lessening the expenses. All in vain, for on the Saturday the amount was larger than that which had so annoyed Philip. So when they were going through the house-keeping books, Philip's brow grew more and more clouded. He had put his arm round Adèle's waist when he began, but gradually had withdrawn it. At last the ominous total was found. It was £2 3s. 7½*d.* For a moment Philip looked at it. Then he turned to Adèle, and said—

‘This will never do, Adèle! we shall get into debt if this sort of thing goes on!’

‘Can't we really afford it, dear?’ said Adèle, very timidly.

‘Most decidedly we cannot afford it! why, how much do you think this means in a year?’ cried Philip.

‘I don't know,’ said Adèle.

‘Can’t you count?’ cried Philip, somewhat harshly.

‘I can co—coun—t, only you are so cross—oss with me—e,’ whimpered little Adèle, sitting down and covering her face with her hands so that Philip should not see her crying.

‘There, there, don’t be foolish, my dear. I did not mean to be harsh, only I don’t want you to get into careless, improvident ways. Come, Adèle, don’t cry any more. I know you’ll try to do better,’ said Philip.

But Adèle cried the more, and only stopped when Philip drew her on his lap and kissed her tears away. Then he insisted on explaining to her that £2 3s. 7½*d.* a week would amount to £109 1s. 3*d.* in the year, only leaving them £40 18s. 9*d.* to pay rent, taxes, rates, coals, gas, and the servant’s wages. Now as the rent and taxes alone came to £24, the servant’s wages being £7, they would only have £9 18s. 9*d.* left for all the other expenses.

Poor Adèle listened, gnawing a corner of her handkerchief, a habit she had contracted

as a child, in a state of terror all the time. For when in these moods Philip positively frightened her. He did not intend to be harsh or unkind, he only desired to impress upon Adèle the great necessity of being economical; unfortunately, he had a peculiar rigid way of saying these unpalatable truths, that struck Adèle with a species of fear.

When Philip had succeeded in impressing upon Adèle the necessity of spending less money, he got up, put on his hat, and went off to see a patient.

Left alone, Adèle threw herself on the sofa and wept bitterly. She was still so much of a child that she actually wept herself to sleep; and when Philip returned from his round, was still sleeping. He knelt down by the sofa and pressed a kiss upon her dimpled chin—and was kissing her cheek when she opened her eyes and met his, beaming with love and tenderness upon her. She threw her arms round his neck and hugged him close to her bosom. And in the kisses he gave her

she forgot all about the annoyance of the money matters, and Philip forgot them too.

‘Come and let’s have some tea,’ said Philip.

‘Lift me up, then,’ cried Adèle.

Philip wound his arms round her, and lifting her from the sofa, carried her right up the stairs to their room, and dropping her on the bed, said—

‘There, Ma’am, you stay quiet whilst I wash my hands.’ Of course Adèle refused, and insisted upon washing her hands first; but Philip seized the soap, and finished his soaping before Adèle was off the bed, and had arranged her dress. Then they went down to tea together, and Philip was as merry as a sand-boy, joking and laughing, and warning Adèle that he was watching her to see that she did not put too much tea into the pot.

When the tea was ‘brewed’ Adèle poured the milk into the cups and looked round for the sugar. There was none on the table, so

she rang the bell and asked the maid to bring some sugar.

‘If you please, m’m, there aint any left.’

‘Oh, well, then you must run to the grocer’s quick for a pound of lump sugar for Mrs Darrell, say.’

‘Yes, m’m,’ said the servant, and departed.

‘Haven’t you any sugar in the house, Adèle?’ said Philip, when the servant was gone.

‘No, dear! I forgot to order it this morning with the other things,’ replied Adèle.

‘But that’s very bad management, my dear,’ cried Philip; then noticing the scared look that came into Adèle’s eyes at the terrible words ‘bad management,’ he stopped without saying anything more on the subject. But he did not speak many words after that the whole tea-time.

Oh! Ye horrible Demons of Good and Bad management. How much have you not to answer for? Especially the Demon of Bad management gives rise to so much recrimination. How many have been made martyrs to

management? It is useless to attempt to count them up, for the number thereof is countless legions. These familiar Demons are the Alpha and Omega of domestic life. And Adèle Darrell was beginning to experience the misery that deficiencies in domestic management cause between man and wife.

It may seem strange and unnatural to those who argue that love hides or condones all errors and ignorance, that Philip should have become so soon alive to the fact of his wife's lamentable want of management. But when it is remembered that Philip had expected, as every lover does, to find his wife Perfection, and not being a fool, had quickly discovered that she was not Perfection in the ordinary business of life, it need not be matter for wonder that he should have felt somewhat disappointed.

Philip all his life-time had been a thorough creature of order ; he loved order as much for its own sake as for the sake of its manifold advantages in the way of facilitating and smoothing the various duties of life. And

when he found his household being gradually delivered over to his enemy, Disorder, he became angry.

But it must be specially noted, that never did he speak an intentionally harsh word to Adèle. As he was quick-tempered, he would state his meaning and dislike to bad habits sharply and plainly, and his openness might have sometimes worn the aspect of unkindness ; for truth, unfortunately, when simply expressed, is often mistaken for harshness.

Poor Adèle felt this with sincere terror. She had never been accustomed to order, and found difficulty in understanding why Philip should attach so much importance to it. With her mother Adèle had never been asked to look after or to manage anything ; in fact, it had always been Madame's policy to retain the management of everything in her own hands, under the pretence that Adèle was too young and too delicate to be initiated into the fatigues of household duties. The consequence of this education, or rather want of education, was that Adèle had become imbued

with notions of *laissez-aller* in duties and work; and when she was called upon, after her marriage, to undertake the management of a house, she was found woefully wanting in the power to do it.

Adèle's highest capacity of duty was to love and esteem her husband with all her heart. She had to learn, by slow and painful steps, that it was also her duty of love, to get his breakfast, and dinner, and tea, and supper ready at the proper hours, and to be able to know whether the meal was nicely set on the table or not, and to correct it if badly done.

Adèle also had to learn that she was the one to see to her husband's clothes and linen; to take care that his shirts had their proper complement of buttons, and that his socks were properly darned. And as she had never been accustomed to do any of these ridiculously small, but very necessary things, she was proportionately annoyed by them.

We have seen in a former chapter the style of Mme De Brenne's dinner-table,

and we can easily understand how quick Philip would be to find fault with and condemn any such thing in his own home.

All these details may seem very insignificant, and beside the purpose of this story; but it is in insignificant matters that man finds his quantum of happiness or misery. A man may not despair of happiness because his best shirt is wanting in a button, but the fact annoys him nevertheless; and the circumstance of a table being slovenly set out, with half-tidy cloth, ill-matching glass, and general askewness of everything on it, need not make a man cut his throat, but it makes him feel very much inclined to swear. And on this subject of laying the table properly, Philip first had to lecture Adèle, and by dint of lecturing for two or three days, added to a practical lesson of how it should be done, managed to convince her that a man could eat his dinner with all the more comfort and pleasure for seeing it tidily and attractively placed before him.

All these little incidents created a species

of soreness in Adèle's mind, for she strongly disliked being lectured or chided; and, as before shown, although Philip spoke on these subjects with all lovingness of intention, in reality he was stern and peremptory in regard to the carrying out of his wishes. Yet no two beings felt greater or purer love for each other. Philip, perhaps, loved Adèle the more for being so much in want of his help and advice. Adèle loved him with passionate love for his upright and noble character, and his tender heart; but shrank, nevertheless, in terror from him when he had to point out to her some mistake in her conduct or error in the care of their home.

Unfortunately for these two, Adèle's fear of Philip grew each day stronger from frequent admonition, and threatened soon to equal the love she felt for him; Philip never noticing this, or setting down her look of fear to a natural feeling of shame at being so ignorant of the simple affairs of life.

So the days passed on in a kind of routine that was full of charm for Philip, for it

embodied his love of order, and yet was sufficiently varied to redeem any inherent monotony; but to Adèle the same routine was hard, and sometimes terribly irksome. She longed to be able to dismiss all these cares from her mind, and to set off for a long ramble in the fields, and there forget the dismal necessities of counting pence, and the fear of spending more money than she ought.

Philip was really just as loving, just as kind, as he was before their marriage; but Adèle missed something in the husband that she had so loved in the lover. That was, a tender deference to her opinion, and to her ideas. Now she felt that Philip set *his* opinion and *his* ideas above hers, and this made her fearful of having lost ground in his esteem.

And it was so hard to bear, this! So hard never to be able to show that she felt unhappy at the thought that Philip rated her opinion at a less value than before. Had she spoken but a word to him on the subject she would have found that Philip had just the

same respect and esteem for her powers of mind as ever ; only he might have retorted upon her complaint that he did not seem to care for her opinion, by saying, ‘Why, darling ! you never offer any opinion now, you always agree with me ; I sometimes wish you would be more independent again ;’ and such a retort would have expressed the exact truth of their altered relations.

The month was drawing to a close, and Philip was as busy as he could be with his patients, when one day a dusty, travel-stained man came walking down the street.

Adèle was at the window and watched him curiously, and seeing him stop opposite the surgery door at Mr Griffith’s and scan the brass plate as if endeavouring to decipher the names, she rang the bell and sent the servant over to ask the man what he wanted.

‘I’m looking for work, Miss,’ said he, ‘and seeing the big garden at the back of this house, thought I might get some here, if I asked.’

‘Oh ! But I don’t think the Doctors

want anybody to help in the garden just now,' said the maid. 'I'm sure Dr Darrell——'

'Dr Darrell!' cried the man, turning abruptly to the servant. 'Did you say Dr Darrell?'

'Yes! He's my master,' said the girl.

'Ah! Dr John Darrell, isn't it?' asked the man.

'No, sir, it's Dr Philip Darrell,' cried the maid.

'That aint the one I want, then,' said the man, and turned to walk away; but just at this moment Philip drove up in his phaeton, and the man looked at him once only, but stopped till he had got down. Then he came up to him and asked in a humble voice whether the gentleman could give him any work to do.

'What can you do?' asked Philip.

'I can dig and garden a bit, sir,' said the man, touching his rough hat, 'as I was always brought up as a gardener, when a boy.'

'I rather think Dr Griffith wants a gar-

dener, but I am afraid that he would like to know something about you,' said Philip. 'Do you know any one in Maidstone who would vouch for your honesty and that sort of thing?'

'No, sir!' cried he, in so sad a voice that Philip instantly felt a sympathy for him, 'I know nobody here. I'm a man without a home, and without a friend.' With that he touched his hat to Philip and was walking away, when Philip called out to him,

'Stop, my friend! I feel interested in you, I hardly know why; but I fancy I have heard your voice somewhere before. There's a ring in its tone that reminds me of a young girl whom I attended in London. Poor soul, I wonder what has become of her? Come round to my house to-night at about eight o'clock, clean yourself up and make a decent appearance, and I'll see what I can do for you.'

With that Philip slipped a shilling into the man's hand, and walked into the surgery. The dusty fellow looked after him a moment,

and his lips moved tremulously, and he brushed his sleeve across his eyes, as if some tear had forced its way along his hard rough cheek at such unwonted touch of kindness from a stranger ; then he walked quietly away with his hand clenched on the shilling that Philip had given him, and a strange look of joy in his restless eyes.

In the evening at the time appointed a man in a coarse brown suit, threadbare and old, with a clean-shaven face and clean hands, knocked at Philip's house-door. The servant let him into the passage, and Philip opening the dining-room door at the same time, he made a rough bow and announced himself as the man he had told to come in the evening.

‘Just come in here,’ said Philip, walking into the dining-room. The man obeyed. ‘Sit down a minute,’ said Philip kindly.

The man hesitated, but obeyed as Philip made a gesture with his hand.

After a bit Philip began to talk to him, and soon drew from him such a sad tale of

want and despair, that his heart was contracted with a sympathetic chill.

‘And I’ve been an honest man all my life,’ said the applicant for work, and the tone of his voice convinced Philip of the truth of his words. ‘But I don’t seem able to get on.’

‘Why is that?’ asked Philip. ‘Tell me the truth freely and openly, it will be for the best.’

‘The fact is, sir, then, that I had to leave my work and hide myself because I knocked a man down, who had tried to hurt my little girl; the man was nearly killed, and a policeman came to take me up; but I got away from him, and I’ve wandered along country roads, through towns and villages, asking everywhere for work, but no one caring to take me in and help me.’

Philip looked full in the man’s face when he had said this, and when he ceased speaking asked him a question.

‘You are certain that you never stole anything, and that it was really for knocking a

man down who had insulted your daughter that you ran away from your work ? ’

‘That’s just the truth what I’ve told you, sir,’ said the man.

‘Well,’ said Philip, ‘I think I can believe you ; and I will give you a chance to settle down once more.’

With that he got up, put on his hat, and took the man over to Mr Griffith’s, who, after a few minutes’ questioning, engaged him as gardener, with prospect of getting well paid if he behaved himself. He had a little house at the end of the garden to live in, and was to receive 18s. a week to begin with.

As Philip and Mr Griffith turned their backs on him to walk back to the house, the man stood up and looked after them. Suddenly Mr Griffith turned, and called out—

‘By the by, what’s your name, my friend ? ’

‘John, sir,’ replied he.

‘Very well, that will do,’ said Mr Griffith, and walked back to the house with Philip.

‘I might have added Wright,’ said the man, ‘and given my name John Wright, in full, but perhaps Mr Darrell would have known me again. Odd that the doctor didn’t ask my name at the very first. It’s better like that, though, I suppose.’

So saying he turned and went into his little cabin-like house, and fetched out a hoe, and busied himself clearing away some weeds from the path, and from a small flower-bed by the plum wall.

And in this manner John Wright came to be at Maidstone. In a very few days he had gained the good will of his employer by his steady attention to work. The children liked him too, for he made them whistles and whip-handles out of old board, and was never tired of waiting on them.

He had at last reached a haven of rest and safety after his troubled wanderings. No one ever learned more about his journey from London than he told to Philip Darrell. As for himself, a strange fascination held him to the spot where Dr Darrell lived. Once or

twice Mr Griffith had lent him to Philip to mow the lawn in his little garden or to dig the ground up ; and on such occasions Adèle had given him bread and cheese and beer, and spoken so kindly and cheerily to him that John Wright had felt that he could do anything to serve so good a lady.

The poor fellow longed and thirsted for kind words and little attentions, and with Adèle he found both. She was interested by the old man's gray hair that was silvering quickly now, and her young heart grew full of pity as she noted the unvarying look of sorrow in John Wright's face. So she always spoke kindly and gently to him, and her French education having taught her to be deferential to the aged, she paid him little attentions that he had never received before in his life. And perhaps it was through this that he came to think that Adèle was like his own child had been before she met Tom Darrell. He fancied he caught similar tones of voice, saw the same kindness beaming from her eyes, and with the strength of his passion-

ate nature the old gardener grew to love Adèle as he had loved his own Kate.

Dr Griffith soon found that there was no need to tell the gardener to go over to Mr Darrell's to mow the lawn or clip the plants. It was all done without that. John was only too glad to be doing something for Mrs Darrell. He would often cut a slip from a rare geranium or a beautiful calceolaria, and tend it with wonderful care till it grew strong enough to be planted in the kind lady's garden. Once he went regularly every day to water the whole of the flower-beds, as there was a time of drought, and Philip was without water for the garden. The old fellow drew pailful after pailful from the well in Dr Griffith's stable-yard, so that Adèle's flowers should not suffer for want of the precious fluid. He always gave the flowers their homely English names, for he was no first-class gardener, but only a painstaking conscientious fellow. He learned, as he went on, better to know the different flowers and the amount of care and attention each required.

Certainly the rough ordinary work of a garden was so familiar to him that it was easy to believe what he said about having been brought up to gardening as a boy; whether it was actually true or not it is impossible for the writer of this story to say. John Wright's early life was only known by what he himself said of it.

The quiet routine of this calm life was, however, soon to be rudely broken; and his evil desire for revenge, that had become dormant by the disuse and forgetfulness bred by his unruffled life, was again to spring up an armed and terrible thing, like one of the warriors that sprang from the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus.

For one day Adèle sent for him, and with her soft sweet voice begged him to procure a nice bouquet for her in two days' time, as 'I expect my brother on a visit, soon,' she said.

'Your brother, Ma'am?' echoed John Wright.

'Yes! my brother; or more correctly, my brother-in-law, Mr Tom Darrell.'

At the sound of the hated name, poor John Wright started and staggered back, crying,

‘Oh! My God!’ then turned without another word and went away. Back to his work, but unable to lift spade or rake. Back to the place where his life for four weeks nearly had been so calm and peaceful. Back to the quiet garden, with a wild storm raging in his heart.

One of the children of Mr Griffith came into the garden, and seeing him seated on the ground, his head bent forward, rocking himself to and fro, approached him and touched him softly on the shoulder.

‘Don’t cry, John,’ said the child, and John obeyed and stood up, and suddenly caught up the fair-haired boy in his arms, and gave him a mighty kiss.

Meanwhile, Adèle sat wondering what could have so upset the gardener. Two days afterwards came a letter from Tom Darrell, saying that he was unable to come, but forgetting to give any reason for his non-

fulfilment of his promise. Days passed without the old gardener showing himself outside, and Adèle sent over the servant to see whether he was ill.

But John Wright was not ill. He was only horribly tortured by the doubts that were rising in his mind. Had he any right to take the law into his own hands? Had he killed his daughter that evening when he tried to kill Tom Darrell?

CHAPTER VIII.

SOPHY MCCLEAK'S DEVOTED ADMIRER — TOM DARRELL, ALTERED, BUT NOT IMPROVED—BILLIARDS, CARDS, AND BETTING—DEBTS OF HONOUR—FRIENDS BECOMING IMPATIENT FOR THEIR MONEY, AND BILLS REQUIRING SETTLEMENT, FORCE HIM TO FIND MONEY 'SOMEWHERE' —THE 'SOMEWHERE'—RESULTS OF THIS ACTION—PHILIP AND TOM.

TOM DARRELL is very much altered since we last had the honour of his presence on our pages. He has grown very quiet, very good, very religious, and is very much afraid of being out alone in the dark. He has dropped a great deal of his American bluntness when with Mr Allerton, he is no longer loud in his talk, he swears but little, and goes to church twice every Sunday with Sophy McCleak. For the estimable McCleak family, from the Isle of Man, where the male McCleak

is a member of the Legislature, had taken a residence in Berry Street, and Tom soon found them out. We have seen him flirting with Miss Sophy once before, at Mr Allerton's dinner-party. He had visited the family once or twice since then, and always kept up his devotion to her. So that he was in a fair way to become quite a reformed character. Miss Sophy was very proud of her cavalier, as indeed she well might be; for Tom was very handsome, and gentlemanly in the extreme.

Occasionally, however, Tom swerves from his attentive devotion, and for several evenings Miss McCleak sees nothing of him. When he returns he is so full of repentance, and, it is to be feared, Miss Sophy really so liked him, that he is soon and easily pardoned.

Had she been able to follow Master Tom to a snug water-side public-house, and see him at play with the rascally-looking fellows he often associated with in these places, Sophy would have begged her mother to order the door to be kept shut against Tom Darrell. She noticed, occasionally, when

he had not been near her for two or three evenings, that his hand shook very much, and that he seemed all abroad as to his actions. However, he was always able to explain this satisfactorily to her, and by his ready-witted lying and consistency in lying managed always to lull her suspicions. And as he took care for the following two or three weeks to be very attentive and kind, Sophy was only too glad to forgive him, and forget his occasional vagaries.

It is doubtful, very, whether Tom really was endeavouring to correct himself of his many follies. He did not call them by the harsh name of vices. We have heard him reason out his code of morality, and it is therefore hard to believe that he was ever sincere in anything but the pursuit after his own pleasures. And billiards were so great a fascination. And cards exerted so great a charm over him. And as he had added to his other morsels of excitement the supremely exhilarating pastime of betting, it will be readily seen that every fibre of his nervous

system was always at its greatest tension. These pastimes were making him look old, and his prematurely aged face was accounted for by Mr Allerton as a sign of growing seriousness and the result of hard work. Mr Allerton said once that Tom would soon look as old as his brother Philip.

The brothers had not met since Philip left for his wedding-trip, but they corresponded pretty frequently. Tom, however, in his letters never mentioned Sophy McCleak; why, I do not know.

People with plenty of money may play at billiards, at cards, and indulge in horse-betting with pleasure; for when it comes to heavy losses they can retire and still retain sufficient to live upon, perhaps with comfort. It is very different when the player or bettor possesses no source of income other than what comes from his daily work; a few pounds lost make a great difference, when one's income is only about a hundred and thirty pounds a year. Consequently, as Tom was not so skilful at cards as he was at

billiards, and did not always know how to bet safely, he became gradually more and more involved in debt.

Billiard sharpers were his creditors, and cheaters at cards claimed money from him. He owed money for his drink at one or two public-houses, and the landlords began to grow impertinent to him. And yet all the while he went on. Some he pacified by promising to settle all their claims as soon as he got married; for he had given out to his boon companions that he was going to marry a rich girl; but even Tom had shrunk from telling them who the girl was.

But others there were who would not be pacified, and who pressed angrily for a settlement of their claims. By forestalling his quarter's salary he managed to silence them, but when the quarter day came he found himself in as great a fix as before. He had many bills to pay and no money to pay them with. His landlady threatened, his tailor, his shoemaker, an honest German with seven children and an immense wife, and his rascally

companions at cards and billiards all threatened. Money must be had. Where could he get it? He wrote to Philip, and told a most terrible and piteous story.

Philip was moved and interested, and like a fool sent him a cheque for £5. That was swallowed up in a minute, and people grew more menacing every day.

At last, perfectly desperate, Tom committed a crime.

He one day was sent to the Bank with a cheque for £7, by Mr Morson, who wanted to draw that amount from his private account.

Now Tom knew that Mr Morson, the junior partner in J. Allerton and Co.'s, was one of the most careless of men over his own affairs, and as he looked at the cheque a sudden idea struck him. Here was the means of getting the money he needed. He went into a coffee-room, and called for a cup of coffee, asking the waiter at the same time to bring pen, ink, and paper.

He sat down, took out the cheque, and made some alterations in it; then sipped his

coffee, went out, and walked straight to the Bank—The London and County.

‘How will you take this, sir?’

‘Notes and gold—£10 gold will do.’

‘One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, £5 notes! One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, golden sovereigns. A good deal of money for a £7 cheque!’

Tom Darrell counted the notes carefully, then the gold, and put all in his purse and walked quietly away, back to the office. There he handed £7 to Mr Morson.

That night he went round and paid every penny that he owed, and found himself with £3 left in his pocket. He went to bed trembling like a leaf.

All went on very quietly and steadily for the next three weeks, and Tom congratulated himself on his clever little trick. He was more attentive than ever to Sophy, and she began to be very much in love with him.

He had known them now for six months, and Mrs McCleak was well pleased to find

her daughter wooed by a gentleman, albeit a poor one. It was rumoured that the male McCleak had accumulated his fortune in the grocery business ; consequently his wife felt highly delighted at the prospect of her daughter marrying a gentleman. The consent of the McCleak to their betrothal was easily obtained, and some two weeks after this affair of the cheque, Tom formally engaged himself to Miss Sophia Jane McCleak, and made her a present, bought with the remainder of the cheque money, of a handsome engagement ring, which Sophy had the exquisite pleasure of wearing on the third finger of her left hand ; moreover, he dropped most of his dubious friends, and Sophy had no complaint now to make of him.

He used to sit on a low ottoman by her side, and leaning his head on her lap look up to her with his bewitching eyes. Sometimes Sophy insisted on taking that place, and her sweetest delight was to feign sleep for Tom to wake her by kissing her lips and eye-lids. Or when he sat at the piano pouring out the

melody of his delicious voice, Sophy loved to carry her ottoman to the piano and sit by in ravishing attention. And Tom would now and then bend down and kiss her, softly and lightly, and Sophy would kiss him back in return.

How joyously quiet those evenings were. How happy Tom used to feel seated by Sophy's side, his arm round her waist, her soft breath and long hair curling round him. The sense of his own danger was soon forgotten in the delicious happiness of those evenings with Sophy.

He never perhaps once thought of poor Katie Wright, rotting away in a pauper's grave! Why should he? All that was past and done, and he had banished it from his mind. Tom did not acknowledge the grim force of the old Egyptian habit of setting up a skeleton to watch the feast. The bare idea sickened him. He did not wish to have the skeleton of his dead and buried pleasures always thrust before him. Let it rot! And

crumble to dust! He had done with it forever!

But one morning Mr Morson was looking over the cheques sent back from his banker, and a curious whim prompted him to compare them with the corresponding parts in the cheque-book. And he smiled as he noted the hieroglyphics on them. But he did not smile when he came to a cheque presenting so great a discrepancy between it and its counterpart, as the following:—

No. 29718.	No. 29718.	October 19th. 18—
Date. Oct. 19th.	LONDON & COUNTY BANK,	
To whom payable.	Lombard Street.	
Bearer	Pay—	Cash— Or Bearer
What for. Cash.	Seventy Pounds—	
£7—	£70—	FRANK MORSON.

‘Now I wonder whether I could have made such an absurd mistake as this?’ thought he. ‘Either I wrote seven, or—ah! I fancy I can penetrate the mystery. The “ty” has been added to my seven, and a nought placed after the figure. At least it looks very much like it.’ He rang his little bell, and Tom came in answer.

‘Mr Darrell, I’m in trouble about this cheque,’ said Mr Morson, and placed it under his eyes.

Tom turned white with fear, he thought he was discovered ; but as Mr Morson was not looking at him, he managed to overcome his agitation and to reply,

‘Something very serious this, sir,’ said Tom. ‘Could you have made so great a mistake?’

‘Impossible!’ cried Mr Morson. ‘I fancy the cheque has been tampered with. Look at these two letters, “ty,” these are written with thicker strokes than the seven, and now both are some weeks old the ink looks blacker, and a different colour of black.’

Tom took the cheque in his hand, and pretended to examine it ; but he shook all over, and laid it down again on Mr Morson’s desk without saying a word.

‘I’ll step down to the Bank to see who cashed this cheque ; the clerk will probably remember,’ said Mr Morson. ‘For that is the only way I can imagine of solving this

problem.' And he put on his hat and walked out.

Tom went back to his desk, took out some papers he did not care to leave behind him, and put them in his pocket. Then he went to the hat-rack, got his hat, put it on, and walked out of the office; hailed a 'bus, saw it was a Shoreditch omnibus, and shook his hand to the conductor not to stop. Then he went on, and at the Bank got into a London Bridge omnibus and rode to the station. There he took a third-class ticket for Maidstone.

Meantime Mr Morson had reached the Bank, and the cashier told him at once, without any hesitation, that Mr Darrell had cashed the cheque and taken the money in notes and gold. Mr Morson thanked him, and walked away. When he returned to the office, Tom Darrell was gone, and that fact convinced him that Tom Darrell was the culprit.

Mr Allerton was away in the country, on business, and Mr Morson telegraphed to him to return at once. When he arrived the next

morning Mr Morson took him into his private room, and was proceeding to explain the serious matter to him when some one knocked at the door.

‘Come in!’

A clerk entered and said—

‘Mr Darrell wishes to speak to you, sir.’

The partners looked at each other in wonder.

Then Mr Morson said—

‘Ask him to walk in here.’

A firm step sounded along the passage, and Dr Philip Darrell entered the room.

Both partners saw at a glance the trouble and shame expressed in Philip’s face—and simultaneously they sprang forward and shook hands with him. They guessed that he had called about his brother.

‘Gentlemen, I have come to ask your indulgence for my brother,’ said Philip.

‘I am afraid, Mr Darrell, that we should be wrong to show him any indulgence,’ said Mr Morson.

‘Surely you will not be inexorable for a

moment of forgetfulness on his part—I should rather say a moment of temptation. My brother came to me last night and confessed all—his follies, his vices, his crime. I have not told him that I intended to come to you to plead for indulgence. And I do not ask you to be merciful for his sake so much as for the sake of my father's good name, and his mother's gray hair. I come prepared to pay you back the money he took, and to ask you to keep the cheque he has falsified as a weapon against him, for God knows whether anything but fear will keep him from wrongdoing.'

Philip's hands were tight clasped between his knees, and his face was red with the shame the words caused him. His voice trembled, but never once lost its clear honest ring. The two merchants listened to him with great emotion, for the shame an honest man feels for a crime is something sad to look upon. When he ceased speaking, he looked up, and as he did so Mr Morson extended his hand again to him. Philip took it, and his

face cleared as he felt its cordial grasp on his own.

‘Sir, I esteem your courage very highly,’ said Mr Morson, ‘and I thoroughly sympathize with your grief. Believe me that nothing short of your own expressed wish shall ever induce me to use this falsified cheque against your brother. I should not consider myself warranted in refusing to accept a return of the money taken—’

‘No, no!’ interrupted Mr Allerton, ‘you really must not do—’

‘Pray allow me to finish this affair in my own way, my dear sir,’ cried Mr Morson; ‘I think you will see that it will be for the best.’

‘I have brought my cheque-book with me,’ said Philip, ‘and I thank you sincerely for allowing me to make this reparation.’ So saying he drew his small cheque-book from his breast coat-pocket, and taking a pen, drew a cheque for £63, payable to Mr Morson, or order, and handed it over to him.

Mr Morson took it calmly, wrote a receipt

for it ; then endorsed the cheque. He handed the receipt to Philip, who glanced at it, folded it up, and put it in his purse. At the same moment, he heard a sound of paper being torn. He looked up, and saw that Mr Morson had torn the cheque in halves, and continued to tear it till it was reduced to a mere heap of shreds. These he handed to Philip, saying—

‘ You have paid me, Dr Darrell ; you will forgive me if I refuse to deprive you of so large a sum of money.’

Tears started into Philip’s eyes as he understood in a moment the beautiful kindness and delicacy of this action, and grasping Mr Morson’s two hands in his own, he murmured—‘ Thank God !’

As soon as he had released Mr Morson, John Allerton cried, ‘ Damme, Frank, you are a brick,’ and shook him heartily by the hand.

Philip stood before them, crushed by shame and the weighty load of obligation these two men had imposed upon him. He hardly knew how to terminate this interview,

so full of bitterness and joy. Mr Morson saved him from further embarrassment by asking him whether he would like to walk with him to the Bank, when he could get a 'bus for London Bridge Station, and Philip eagerly availed himself of the loophole of escape held out to him.

He shook hands with Mr Allerton and went out with Mr Morson. On the way Mr Morson spoke of everything he could think of to dispel his companion's embarrassment ; and so kind and genial was he that Philip for a moment did forget the terrible subject of his journey.

Mr Morson shook hands very cordially with him as he got into the omnibus, and Philip muttered a fervent 'God bless you, sir,' as they parted.

He reached Maidstone again utterly exhausted and ill, and totally incapable of work that day. When he got home he found Tom playing at draughts with Adèle.

She knew nothing of Tom's wrong-doing, and Philip determined to say nothing to her

about it. He had some tea and went upstairs and lay down on the bed, trying to sleep. He dozed a little and must have slept, for when he opened his eyes again it was quite dark, and from the drawing-room floated the melodious harmony of Beethoven's 'Sonate Pathétique.'

Philip lay and listened; he recognized Tom's firm, masterly touch of the piano, and an irrepressible sadness came over him. He could feel the tears gathering in his eyes and slowly roll down his cheeks. He could not have explained why he wept. We have before shown how easily Philip was moved by pathos and how easily by humour; but there was no pathos for Philip in the sounds that issued from the drawing-room, his sadness was independent of them, yet also heightened by them. And the subject of his reflections was that Tom seemed to be totally blind to his own vices.

Presently the melody ceased, and a light footstep sounded on the stairs. Philip knew

it well ; and Adèle opened the bed-room door and came in on tiptoe.

‘Philip!’ she called, very softly, as if fearing to wake him.

‘Yes, darling,’ answered Philip.

Adèle shut the door and flew to him and kissed him.

‘I came up twice during the evening,’ she said ; ‘but you were asleep each time, dear.’

‘I dreamt that you kissed me, darling,’ said Philip.

‘Of course you did,’ cried Adèle, ‘since I kissed you both times. Now you must get up, if you feel well enough, and come down to supper.’

‘Very well, dear, I will,’ replied Philip. ‘Will you light a candle?’

Adèle lit it, and Philip washed his face and hands, and smoothed his hair, and together they went down to supper.

Tom was in the dining-room, ensconced in an easy-chair, with his legs thrown upon

another chair, reading. He got up as Philip and Adèle came into the room and put his book down. Philip took it up to look at it, as he passed. It was the second volume of *Les Contes Drolactiques*, of Balzac. Philip frowned and put the book down again; as, although his library numbered on its shelves, the 'Decameron,' 'Heptameron,' and Balzac's 'Contes,' yet he kept them on the very top shelf, and did not like to see them lying about the room.

During supper-time, however, Philip was witty and gay as usual, and Tom the same. Adèle was very merry, and took pleasure in adding her quip and sly shot to the jokes of Tom and Philip. But after supper Philip asked her, in an undertone, to go to bed early as he wished to have a long conversation with Tom. So that in about half-an-hour Adèle got up and bade Tom good-night.

Tom shook hands with her and kissed her on the cheek. Philip did not seem to notice this. As soon as Adèle was gone, however,

Philip grew serious and stern. Tom saw this, and waited in silence for him to begin speaking.

‘I hardly know what to say to you, Tom,’ began Philip, ‘this is so much more serious a business than the fifteen pounds. I don’t know whether you were aware of the crime you were committing, or of the penalty our laws impose upon it. Mr Morson has the power to send you to penal servitude for seven years, and has threatened to use that power unless I ask him not to do so. We are both young, Tom, and I am only three years the senior, and there remain to us many years, please God, during which we may redeem our early errors by a life of increased usefulness. Unfortunately for you, my dear brother, you have been gifted by God with handsome features and winning manners, and the kindly notice people have taken of you ever since you were a youngster turned your head. Perhaps your follies would not have brought you to this terrible pass if you had been dowered

with fortune as well as beauty. As it is, you have no right to be a fool, Tom, since you cannot afford it.'

'You're quite right, Philip,' said Tom. 'And I can assure you I feel all you say to me very much indeed; but you see, old fellow, I was so horribly pushed at that moment.'

'That's nonsense, Tom!' cried Philip. 'You cannot, or ought not, to make any excuse for your conduct. You take a totally vicious view of life, and you attempt to dismiss principle and honesty by a few ridiculous sophisms. I don't know what you feel at this moment, but I swear to you that *I* feel as if I could see scores of fingers all pointed at me, and hear voices crying out, 'Look at the brother of a thief!'

'Oh, Philip! for God's sake, stop!' cried Tom; 'you speak so bitterly and so unkindly to me. Mother would forgive me if I promised to try and do better.'

Philip started up as Tom uttered the word 'Mother,' and wrung his hands convulsively as he walked up and down the room.

‘Oh, poor mother!’ he said aloud. ‘Poor brave woman! Surely this is not to be the end of all your sacrifices, of all your struggles, of all your suffering. What! you could pinch, and starve, and dress meanly, you who have known such luxury, for it all to end in this. God forbid you should ever know it. Tom,’ he added, striding fiercely up to his brother, ‘I could swear to kill you, if ever you disgrace us in this way again. I won’t ask you to make me any promises, for I should doubt them if they were ever so solemn. But one thing you must do; that is, think seriously over the terrible life from which I have plucked you. I cannot afford to pay, or even to offer to pay, £70 again for you, and in a future crime you may not meet with a kind man like Morson, but one as stern and inflexible as Fate itself. And then nothing will save you from the convict prison.’

Tom covered his face with his hands and groaned.

Philip took his hands in his, and continued—‘There! there! Tom! God forbid

I should be hard upon you when strangers are so kind. You'll do better henceforth ; so don't give way to unmanly despair. Look your trouble in the face. Beat it down and crush it under you by a nobler life in the future.'

Tom stood up by his brother, and at the moment all the tenderness of his heart overflowed, and he clasped Philip round the neck and kissed him.

Philip was deeply moved by this sudden action.

'I'll try to think over this very seriously, Phil,' said Tom, 'for your words have made me see how great my fault was!'

'All right, old fellow,' replied Philip, cheerfully, 'I don't think you could do a better thing. But, by Jove, it's half-past eleven! Good-night! I must sit up a little while longer, as I have some writing to do ; but you must be tired.'

'Good-night!' said Tom. They shook hands and separated for the night. Philip listened a moment to his brother's footsteps

on the stairs. Suddenly he started up. He fancied he heard a laugh. In truth he had ! for as Tom shut the door behind him a cynical smile was on his lips, and as he went up the stairs his merriment increased so much that he burst into a laugh and muttered derisively—

‘ What a damned ass Phil is ! ’

CHAPTER IX.

TOM AT MAIDSTONE—ALLEN HEYSON BECOMES WATCHFUL
—THE TORMENTS OF AN HONEST LOVER—PHILIP'S FOLLY
JUSTIFIES TOM'S EXCLAMATION ON THE STAIRS—A KISS
IN THE MORNING AND A KISS AT NIGHT—ADÈLE AND
TOM.

NO one is able to foresee what God holds in store for him of evil or of good. Many a calamity might be warded off had man prescience of the future. Assuredly had Philip Darrell been able to look forward into his life with true clear vision, he never would have allowed Tom to become an inmate of his quiet home. As it was, he could hardly help it, and Tom coolly settled himself down to live upon his brother with the sublime indifference to common gratitude and common decency that had already enabled him to go unscathed through the various and many follies of his life.

He made no attempt to find employment. In fact Philip had told him that it would be useless doing so, as the cost of the advertisements would be thrown away, for Allerton & Co. would certainly decline to answer any reference concerning him. Tom had the more readily acquiesced in this advice, as he had already made up his mind to enjoy a holiday in the country. He felt no shame at living at Philip's expense, perhaps rather enjoyed it; and certainly had a simple egotistical idea that by singing and playing to Adèle, and making himself generally odd man about the house, he amply repaid his brother for his keep.

Tom was a clever fellow at carpentering, and amused himself with finishing Philip's little surgery for him. In so doing he discovered and pointed out to Adèle and Philip with a peculiar zest the amount of bad planning in Philip's arrangement. He whistled and sang so joyously at this work, that the little house became transformed, and seemed to live a gayer life than it ever had before.

Ordinarily everything was as quiet as possible when Philip was away visiting his patients, and Adèle had often felt exceedingly dull; but now all this was changed. Tom was ever ready with a merry jest or a jolly burst of song, and his handsome face and winning ways introduced new elements of pleasure into the home.

Poor Philip was as awkward as ever, and had not overcome his nervousness even yet, except when he was with his patients. Then he ceased to be nervous, because he forgot himself in thinking of them. At home he showed himself strangely silent with Tom. A great melancholy was creeping over him, and he could only dispel it by plunging with renewed ardour into work. Consequently he was perpetually forming a contrast to Tom, disadvantageous in the extreme to himself. With quick and ready wit Tom perceived this, and made a pretence of yielding to Philip and his opinion in every possible way; and Adèle noticing Tom's endeavours to put his brother always in the foremost place, inwardly

felt grateful to him for his kindness, whilst at the same time perceiving involuntarily that poor Philip only appeared the more awkward the more prominent he became.

Soon after Tom's instalment in his brother's house Allen Heyson began to visit Philip more than he used to do, and appeared very solicitous of making Tom's acquaintance.

He felt a vague mistrustful dislike of Tom when he had seen him again three days running, and his strong good sense dimly showed him a peril in Tom's daily attendance on Adèle. She was still such a child, and had so open a way of manifesting her enjoyment of things and her likings for people, that Allen sometimes trembled at his own thoughts. So he used to take Tom off with him on long boating excursions up the Medway, or pic-nics in the old stone quarries. Sometimes they would take a sail down to Chatham and marvel at the fortifications. In fact everything he could do he did, for the express purpose of keeping Tom away from

Adèle. Sometimes he would call at unexpected moments, only to find Tom as merry as a lark, and Adèle either occupied with her household tasks or quietly doing needle-work, and listening to Tom's singing. And at such moments Adèle looked so confiding and pure, that Allen felt that no man could ever dream of hurting so sweet a creature. He judged of others by himself. First, he knew that he could not live many days in the house with Adèle without being madly in love with her, and he conjectured that Tom must be the same; secondly, he felt that however much he might love Adèle, he could never harbour any thought that could prove injurious to her.

Now it must be noted that Tom thought Adèle very amusing and interesting, but strange to say, he really loved Sophy McCleak. Probably absence lent to her extra charms, although her own were great enough by themselves to chain a lover to her. And Tom knew that Sophy loved him as ardently as, and perhaps more purely than, he loved her. Besides, he knew that she had money, and that

her mother was only too glad to call him son-in-law to stipulate much about settlements, and he was perhaps quite as much captivated by Sophy's money as by herself. Yet there was a vein of true and manly feeling in this love that caused him to consider Adèle only in the light of an amusing and interesting friend. Consequently he only beheld her beauty through a glass slightly opaque and with his attention fixed more upon Sophy than upon Adèle. To Allen Heyson, of course, all this was hidden.

Sometimes after he had been sitting in the little drawing-room listening to Adèle's gay joyous conversation, and noting how much she prized Tom's approval and notice of what she said, he would go away with tears in his eyes, and walk miles and miles before he could grow calm and banish from his mind the memory of her smiles, or close his ears to the sound of her voice. Adèle was so essentially one whose opinions, thoughts, and conduct were guided by the opinions, thoughts, and conduct of others that she was always craving

sympathy and guidance from those around her. Allen had long known this, and it had been his greatest happiness to listen to her arch questions and problems of conduct. But he had lost almost instantly this sweet influence over her when Philip had made his appearance at Maidstone. It can be easily imagined that Allen at first felt some degree of bitterness against his rival, but his native nobility of character had soon re-asserted its power over him, and though less happy, still he took pleasure in seeing the happiness of his friend. There is something inexplicable in love, else surely Adèle would have learned to love Allen before Philip came to snatch away the prize. For Allen was so noble-hearted, so manly and courteous, that few women could know him long without feeling and acknowledging his worth. But the sympathetic chord had not vibrated in Adèle's bosom when he spoke to her. There was a something indefinable wanting in him that she had recognized and welcomed at once in Philip, her old playmate.

Now, he had long ceased to look upon her otherwise than as one whom he held still dearer to him than life, but not dearer than his honour, or the honour of his friend, and though he would have cheerfully sacrificed his own happiness to save that of Adèle, yet he would have wished so to do it that she would never know whence the sacrifice came. But when he met Tom Darrell again in Philip's house, his heart had suddenly contracted from emotion. Fear, sadness, and a foreboding of evil had all contributed to give rise to this sudden feeling. He frankly distrusted Tom, and, perhaps with greater penetration than Philip, discerned the living evil in Tom's character. His gay and heartless *insouciance*, his light mockery of all that other men usually hold sacred, or free from the heat of discussion, his undisguised contempt for the decencies and restraints of social life, never expressed otherwise than in a tone of flip-pant sarcasm, or deadly sneer, had all contributed to make this impression upon him. To Allen, Tom's gaiety always had a forced

ring in it that sounded as if he laughed simply in utter contempt of those who find in this life so many causes to weep.

And when he had seen him by Adèle's side, answering her earnest queries, sometimes with a jest, sometimes with an earnestness of mockery that was more killing to the soul than Death, he had absolutely trembled for her safety. His simple idea of the rectitude of conduct required of us by God was aroused by the flippancy of Tom's talk, and several times already he had half-angrily thrown into the discussion his mite of homely, straightforward truth; but, alas, only with the result of drawing Tom's sneer from the subject matter of the conversation to himself. This was the more mortifying, as Adèle sometimes heedlessly joined in the laugh against him. At times like these poor Allen would abruptly take leave of them and seek his usual solace in a long walk.

Philip had ever a genial, hearty welcome for his friend, and was never better pleased than when Allen formed one of the party round the

little supper table. The novelty of Philip's work had worn off by this time, and he had made the discovery, that in order to keep going at it, it should be done systematically, and in as definite a time as the exigencies of the profession would allow. So, as Mr Griffith never saw any patients in the evening, there was nothing further to do after the day's duties than the posting from the day-book into the ledgers. Once this finished, the time, barring accidents, was Philip's own, and he gradually had so timed his work that he was usually at home, free to do pretty much as he liked, soon after five. Tom had been with him about two months when this new order of affairs was brought about, and soon found a marked difference in his amount of intercourse with Adèle. There were nearly always four people now, three of whom were somewhat antagonistic to him. Allen and one of his sisters, sometimes both, were very frequent guests; and now and then Mrs Heyson would insist on her husband's taking her over to Philip's.

On such occasions Mr Heyson and Philip would play chess, and soon, as they were only moderately enthusiastic, after a game or two, would begin a conversation on the momentous topics of man and God, that had always so great a charm for both. Mr Heyson loved to feel his ideas refreshed by the earnestness of his young friend, and Philip delighted to find many of his arguments pointed and rendered more practically applicable to life, by the experience and homely wisdom of Allen's father.

At such times Adèle would be left pretty much to her own devices, and generally assembled around her Tom, and Allen, and his sisters; and as Philip never complained of his arguments being spoilt or interrupted by good music, they would play and sing, utterly regardless of the two 'old fogies,' as Adèle called Philip and Mr Heyson.

Usually, too, Tom accompanied Adèle when she sang, and she would sit by him, listening to the others. He would make himself the life of the party, and, unconsciously imitating him, Adèle would adopt a gay

persiflage utterly foreign to her nature. At such moments a homely truth from Allen would often make her cease her bantering tone, but sometimes also Tom would take up Allen's remark and so twist and turn it into ridiculous shapes as to raise even his sister's laughter, as well as Adèle's, against him. When this happened Allen would turn quite cold and miserable, for there is nothing so repugnant to any man as to be laughed at by the woman he may love, albeit with a love hidden from her.

But Allen bore it all bravely for the sake of the object he had in view. He felt that although he could bring no good to Adèle, he yet might some day save her from evil, and for this end he never resented Tom's sarcasms, however much he inwardly shook with passion.

All day Adèle was with Tom, exposed to the charm of his winning manner, and becoming ever more imbued with his light spirit of mockery. Allen saw all this plainly, and with many terrible doubts longed to be

able to open Philip's mind to the truth. Occasionally he ventured to hint to Philip some idea as to the expediency of finding work for Tom to do; but was surprised and shocked at the abrupt way in which Philip instantly dissented from him. Allen did not suspect the existence of the plague-spot of Tom's crime, that was always rankling and burning in Philip's heart; and it was naturally impossible for him to suspect Philip's terrible susceptibility in this matter; a susceptibility so greatly on the alert that the remotest hint of the necessity of Tom's working awoke the shame again in all its intensity.

Allen was rapidly coming to the same conclusion as Tom had, with regard to Philip. Tom, however, put it that Philip was an ass; Allen certainly deemed him a madman, for exposing his young, inexperienced wife to the too great seductiveness of his brother's society.

One evening, however, he happened to stay late, and Adèle, who did not feel very well, had retired early to bed. Allen noted

with a jealous eye how, after bidding him good-night, she lightly kissed her husband, and then shook hands and kissed Tom good-night. To Allen's intense watchfulness she seemed to linger over her kiss to Tom much more than was necessary, and with a slightly heightened colour. Another time he had been engaged in a chemical experiment with Philip, that took them so far into the night that Philip had insisted upon his staying till the morning, and the two with many a merry laugh had arranged a shake-down on the big soft sofa in the drawing-room. When he came down in the morning he found Philip and Adèle up and waiting for him and Tom. As Tom came down the stairs all his attention was aroused, and he had the bitterness of seeing Tom kiss Adèle as he bade her good-morning and Adèle return the salute.

He marvelled to see that Philip took no notice of it and ate his breakfast with the greatest calm, whilst he, Allen, could hardly swallow what he took on his plate. He readily understood that this morning and

evening kiss had now become a regular habit, and as jealousy remembers everything, Allen could call to mind occasions on which Adèle had waited and waited till Tom came in, simply for the purpose of saying good-night to him. It is impossible to describe the misery Allen suffered from these thoughts.

Philip certainly was a madman in this matter. He knew his brother's evil propensities and the terrible sophistry by which he excused his vices. He knew that Tom had been much impressed by Adèle's beauty the day he had visited Maidstone the first time ; yet there never arose once in Philip's mind the faintest suspicion that his brother could stoop to such vileness as stealing away Adèle's affection. And he was partly justified in this confidence in his brother, by the fact that through all his follies and his extravagancies Tom had never done anything that could injure Philip. Certainly he would borrow money of him and sometimes laugh at him ; but he had never dragged his brother's name into any of the low places he himself had

frequented, and it was a matter of profound ignorance among his vicious circle as to whether Tom Darrell had or had not relations living.

And there remained also in Philip's heart the perfume and the *souvenir* of the days they had passed together at school and as boys. The many battles Tom, as being the stronger, had fought for him, and the punishments he had taken to himself that should have been Philip's. And so he could never bring himself to think unkindly of his brother for any long time, and always had faith in him, till the bitter end dashed this faith to the ground. Oh! brave, confiding Philip! Such men as you are not rewarded in this life or in this world, save by the supreme feeling of ecstasy that duty well fulfilled must ever give. Such men as you are those whose mighty influence, untranslatable, incomprehensible, yet most potent, is permeating the whole world of humanity with its nobleness of precept and heart teaching. You die, but live again in a thousand tender little things, in a thousand

pure ideas that do and will serve to make man's life purer and braver.

So the days passed by in that simple routine of home life and daily work which makes the heroism and the charm of ordinary English existence. A round of little duties, a few tasks easily performed, a circle of friends whose daily life is almost the counterpart of one's own, help to make days and weeks pass unheeded by. Adèle and Tom filled up their spare time with walks, and talks, and games of draughts or back-gammon. Chess was too serious, and demanded too much calculation for Tom; and he only liked back-gammon for the uncertainty of the throw of the dice. His was all spare time, and when Adèle was engaged in the kitchen, he would ensconce himself in the easy-chair in the dining-room, with a book in his lap, and read for hours. But it was characteristic that he seldom read any other but novels, and usually these were of a flashy, catching style. And as often as not he would be reading Boccaccio, or the Queen of Navarre's

Tales, more, it is to be feared, for the peculiar relish of the love intrigues than for the purpose of the study of the manners and conversation of the times these books afford. Philip's library was such an *omnium gatherum* that any taste almost could find in it some work to satisfy it.

There were many of the books that had once belonged to his father, and these Philip cherished and read with greater zest than any others. To Tom they were all alike ; if they were interesting, he would condescend to read them, but he carefully eschewed all of them that displayed a serious bent under their veil of humour or sarcasm.

Adèle sometimes joined him, and made him read aloud to her. It must be said, in justice to Tom, that at this time he would skip any passage too palpably hinting at illicit passions, and sometimes even composed extemporarily to gloss over the break in the narrative such excision naturally caused.

Altogether their intercourse was full of peril to Adèle, but it was so quite uncon-

sciously on Tom's part. He was not astonished to see that she liked to be with him, for all his life he had been accustomed to find people pleased with him and anxious to enjoy his society. He was in no way unduly elated by Adèle's evident pleasure in his company. He noticed sometimes that she imitated his raillery and with some wit, but this simply amused him without arousing his vanity. And happily there was still extended over him the Ægis of Sophy's love.

He thought more of her than he did of Adèle; and in this, perhaps, was the true reason why he could like Adèle, her singing, her playing, her merry, witty conversation, without ever once thinking how easy, or how pleasant, it would be to love her, and to make her love him. There was an Ægis protecting each. On one side Sophy's love, on the other the title of brother Philip's wife.

How long will these Ægidæ be upheld?

CHAPTER X.

PROGRESS OF THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE ALLERTON AND
THÉ RENHARD FAMILIES—FANNY RENHARD AND JOHN
ALLERTON, JUNIOR—A BURLESQUE OF LOVE—FANNY CAP-
TURES THE BASHFUL YOUTH—A GRAND DINNER-PARTY.

THE principal personages of our story have carried us away from London for some time now ; and perhaps it is only right to return to the honourable company of the Allertons and Renhards that Philip had left.

The friendship between the families had gone on increasing ever since the memorable evening when Philip introduced Mr Allerton to Dr Renhard ; and as the Doctor had daughters to marry, and Mr Allerton had sons to whom he might marry them, the prosecution of the friendship was of double interest to them both.

The Doctor and Mrs Renhard had accepted Mr Allerton's invitation to dinner, and had come away duly impressed with the pepper-castor-glaring dragon and the general magnificence of the establishment.

'Those City men can do that sort of thing,' the Doctor had said, talking to his family about the affair. Soon after Mrs Renhard invited the whole Allerton family to an evening party, and nearly died of envy at the sight of the gorgeous brocade in which Mrs Allerton made her appearance. Bashful John and forward Willie Allerton were received with all due attention, and the Doctor and Mr Allerton, who had so many points in common, paired off for a quiet chat. Fanny Renhard made a dive at John Allerton, junr., and entirely charmed that youth by the vivacity of her flirting. His timidity was quickly dispelled by her ardour, at once engaging and prompting, and before the party was over he had come to the distinct conclusion that Fanny Renhard was a jolly girl.

At supper the Doctor plied the old man and his sons with wine, and Mrs Renhard once condescendingly said to the boys in a tone that brought a blush to Vaughan's face—

‘ You need not be afraid of the Moselle or the Champagne, as they are the finest wines we could buy. They cost nearly half a guinea a bottle.’

Certainly Willie Allerton showed no fear, and imbibed considerably. Even John, who was somewhat more abstemious than his brother, tempted by the rare flavour of the Moselle, had taken so much, that in attempting to dance afterwards, he introduced several impromptu steps into the valse, with the result of treading on Fanny's dress and tearing it. But as she assured him with a sweet smile that he really need not apologize for so slight an accident, John was still further convinced of the fact—that Fanny wished to impress upon him—that she was an exceptionally nice girl. As John was really good-looking, and promised to grow into a hand-

some man, Fanny was to be excused, and even commended in her resolution to make a conquest of him.

He certainly was also a kind-hearted, merry sort of fellow, once his bashfulness dispelled, and Fanny was perhaps quite as much taken with him as he with her. Altogether this evening had been a very successful one, and the Renhards congratulated themselves on having shown the City people that they also could do 'the proper thing.'

After this party the young people had contrived to meet often enough at garden parties and balls at their friends' houses, and it soon became a subject of ordinary comment, that Fanny Renhard was making a desperate set at young John Allerton. Although scraps of such talk as this very often met their ears, neither paid much attention to it. John had become quite in love with Fanny, and she reciprocated his advances as warmly as her maidenly reserve and her somewhat mercenary nature would allow.

She had soon learnt the exact facts of his

position, and also of the allowance his father would probably settle upon him when he married, and few knew better than she did the extent of Mr Allerton's business and the amount of yearly profit he made by it.

She was essentially a practical-minded girl, was Fanny, and had a very keen eye to the main chance; so much so that even during her quasi engagement with John she never let slip an opportunity of flirting also with somebody else of equal position and prospects. All this detail somewhat debases the purity of a love passion, but Fanny had amusing ideas on the subject, that had been partly inculcated by her mother, and partly had taken rise in the circumstances that surrounded her life.

It was the constant boast of Mrs Renhard that none of her girls ever had anything to do with the kitchen, and she took a peculiar pride in the fact that as far as managing a house and servants goes they were as ignorant as children. She rather lauded herself for bringing them up in a kind of false atmosphere that deadens the inventive and the

receptive faculties. And as a consequence the girls had grown up utterly ignorant of the realities of life, and almost devoid of sympathy for any but those whose life was ordered like their own. As Mrs Renhard held the maxim (dear to so many among the middle class), that it is useless getting married unless you can marry some one with plenty of money, it is easily to be understood how well her children would learn and believe this miserable parrot's lesson.

And the Doctor on his side had held before their eyes, ever since they knew how to use them as channels to convey thought to the brain, an example of a life wholly and thoroughly devoted to the making of money. They could never forget his gleeful joy when some woman, whom he did not expect to attend, suddenly sent for him, and how the idea expressed itself in his face, and sometimes in actual words :—

‘ Hurrah ! Here’s another guinea to earn ! ’ and so money, and money alone, had grown to be the standard by which they

measured their friends. This is what introduced into John Allerton's wooing of Fanny Renhard an element of burlesque. I remember, at one of the Renhards' parties, that a man went up to Vaughan, laughing immoderately, and begging him, if he liked fun, to go down to the supper-room and have a look at the two best 'spoons he had ever seen in his life.' Vaughan followed up the hint, and was very much disgusted at seeing his sister Fanny and his friend young Allerton the objects of ridicule to the other guests, from the excessive pleasure Fanny seemed to take in John's company.

Altogether, however, Fanny played her cards so well that young John was ready to fall before her prolonged attacks, with as much grace as he was capable of mustering.

The Doctor was well pleased to see this, as he also had heard in confidence from old Allerton that he intended to give his son £500 a year, and to furnish his house for him when he married. Of course this was repeated to Mrs Renhard, and by her to the daughters.

Fanny knew all about it, so was somewhat amused at the pleasure all manifested at the news. The air was big with the portent of the coming event.

Although the recital of these things takes up but few pages, yet nearly a year in time had elapsed since their beginning. Philip had been present at one or two of the parties, but it was only after he had left that he partly understood Fanny's tactics in their right meaning. So that he was but moderately surprised when he heard of Fanny's engagement to John Allerton, communicated to him in a letter from Mrs Renhard, which letter also invited him and Adèle to a dinner party, to be held more perhaps in honour of this event than for any other reason.

Mrs Renhard had always expressed a great desire to have Adèle presented to her; but Philip, up till that time, had never been able to be away for a whole day. But now that he had been nearly four months in Maidstone, he had made one or two doctor friends, and for the occasion was able to ask one of them

to see his patients for him for that evening he would be in London. So, on the appointed day, Adèle and Philip made their way from Maidstone to London. Tom, for some reason, was not invited, and had to solace himself with extra reading for the occasion.

Philip and his wife got to the Renhards' house in nice time to have a quiet half-hour's conversation with them. Mrs Renhard was exceedingly pleased to see Adèle, and made quite a pet of her all the evening. Probably if she had not been married there would have been no fuss at all made about her. As it was the girls introduced her right and left, and she spent a delightful time.

But the dinner was the great event. Thirty-seven guests were assembled in the dining-room, and with the family made up a party of forty-two. It was with the greatest difficulty that the table was arranged to accommodate thirty-six. The others were obliged to sit about at small tables, and get attended to as best they could. Philip and Adèle, however, had places near Mrs Renhard,

that is, near the head of the table. Philip of course took a good look round, and was amused to see the old familiar faces. There was General Crannette, an old Indian Artillery officer, as thin and slight as it is permitted to mortals, with his wife, a comely stout lady, and Miss Hergard, her daughter by a first marriage. Miss Hergard's face was yellowy-brown, and deeply pitted from small-pox. Another Indian man, Sir James Cowrie, late Commissioner of the Madras Presidency, claimed equal honour with the General, and certainly took up more room, since he was as bulky as the General was lean. These distinguished individuals sat at the right and left at the head of the table with their wives beside them. Philip recognized several of the people he had met at Mr Allerton's, and notably his friend the 'measurer of space,' Mr Rorke, with his wife and daughter Jenny. During the dinner the old City men behaved just as they did at Mr Allerton's. Of course Fanny and John Allerton sat next to each other, and Mr Allerton himself and his wife

occupied the next places to the Indian General. Willie was somewhere near the foot of the table, as much occupied in flirting with one of the Renhard girls as in eating the dinner. Altogether it was a grand affair. More especially for those at the head of the table, near Mrs Renhard; for they were attended to and had everything of the best, whilst the people further down were left to take care of themselves. Luckily, as most of them were experienced diners out, they did not fare badly. Everything was served on silver, engraved with the Renhard crest, a raised gauntleted hand grasping a firebrand, with the motto 'Pax et pecunia,' that Philip always translated into 'Peace and Pennies,' and styled the raised hand, 'A hand clutching the pestle of a mortar,' which certainly it did somewhat resemble. All was done in such first-class style that the gravies were cold, and the wines hot, and the melted butter for the fish looked peculiarly like flour-paste, boiled to a thickness. The Doctor carried out his invariable programme of asking people how

they liked the wine, and just intimating, as a simple matter, what the cost of each wine was. There was a continual buzz of conversation, but no one said anything witty or worthy of being carried away and remembered.

Philip longed for his little home and cheerful table, and contrasted the tea-parties Adèle sometimes gave to her friends, all so full of mirth and pleasantry, with this dulness. Of course, as had always been the case, some patients came during the dinner, causing an interruption to, and a lull in, the conversation, as the Doctor went out to speak to them. And when the surgery-bell rang, Philip unconsciously started up to go and mix some physic. He remembered at once what he was, and sat down again. Some one noticed it and laughed, and Philip good-naturedly laughed too, and explained to the Indian General how it was. Whereat the General and his wife and Miss Hergard laughed, and the Commissioner and his wife also laughed,

so that Philip achieved quite a success, and a momentary renown for infinite wit.

But as all dinners must end, so did this one run its course, and soon after the General departed with his wife and her daughter.

The Cowries stayed to tea ; and the young folks, prompted by Philip, insisted upon a dance. Thus the latter part of the evening was more amusing than the beginning. Adèle made quite an impression on the Renhard family ; and when Philip proposed to take his departure with Adèle to the hotel, Mrs Renhard told him that she had a bed-room for them.

When all the guests had departed Philip chatted with the Doctor and Vaughan, who expressed themselves pleased to hear that he was in a fair way to succeed in the practice at Maidstone. Then they all went to bed.

Adèle and Philip were up soon the next morning, and after an early breakfast—that is, early for the Renhards—took their de-

parture with many expressions of good-will on all sides. Vaughan insisted upon driving them to London Bridge in his phaeton.

Maidstone was reached without any accident on the way, and Philip went his usual daily round.

CHAPTER XI.

ADÈLE WONDERS WHAT HAS BECOME OF OLD JOHN—SHE FINDS HIM AT HIS USUAL WORK IN THE GARDEN—SHE BEGS HIM TO COME TO SET HER PLACE IN ORDER FOR THE COMING SPRING WEATHER—JOHN SEES TOM DARRELL—THE INNER DEVIL GROWS STRONG AGAIN.

THE winter was a very mild one, and Adèle devoted especial care to her purchases of snowdrops and crocuses. She had them planted by old John in the time before Tom had come to Maidstone. Since then she had not seen him, and had very much wondered at it; for usually the old man had shown himself so pleased to be noticed by her, and so ready to work for her. She had not seen him in the village either, and as she was quick to sympathize, and eager always to soothe and comfort, she determined to go

over to Mr Griffith's and seek him. The glamour Tom's presence had brought into the house had perhaps something to do with the fact that Adèle had partly forgotten old John, until she found that he might be useful to her. This species of forgetfulness is very common in the world, and many a man has grieved over fancied slights from a friend, at a time when the friend was perhaps half-unconscious of his existence.

So one morning in the middle of January Adèle stepped across to Mr Griffith's, and after a few minutes' chat with Mrs Griffith, asked to be allowed to speak to the gardener.

'You'll find him somewhere in the grounds, my dear,' said Mrs Griffith; so Adèle trotted through the house and down the steps leading into the garden.

Of course it all looked very bare and desolate, but there were a few arbours with ivy trained over them, that still presented an appearance of the departed summer. Adèle searched for some time without being able to find old John. Then she called out his

name. His voice, answering 'Coming,' sounded from behind or inside of one of the ivy-covered arbours. Adèle ran lightly along the path and met him as he was emerging from it. He started back, uttering a cry as he saw her. Adèle was grieved to see the change in him.

'Why, John,' she cried, 'I've been wondering what had become of you, as you have not presented yourself over the way for the last five weeks nearly. Have you been ill?' she added, speaking very kindly.

'No, ma'am, thank ye, I've been pretty well. Only I've been keeping quiet, for a bit of bad news came to me one day and upset me a little,' said John. There was a mournful ring in the old man's voice.

'But your hair is all turned white, and your face is very thin, and furrowed all over,' cried Adèle.

'Yes,' said John, 'my hair's white now.' He spoke in a dreamy kind of way, and Adèle felt an inexpressible pang of pain touch her heart.

‘I mean to scold you well,’ Mr John, said Adèle, ‘for keeping away from your friends in this manner, and making your poor life less happy than it should be. Why, I’ve missed you very much indeed.’

Here John raised his head, and a shadow of a smile lit up his rugged features at the kind gracious words ; but the look faded very quickly, and the passionless white face resumed its terrible calm. Adèle could not understand the change in the old gardener. She thought his face reminded her of a picture she had once seen of a landscape on a mountain-side, just after the eruption of the volcano, for the lines in it somewhat resembled the cooled lava-streams. In truth, it was, perhaps, so. For after Adèle had asked him that day, some weeks past, for a bouquet, and told him that Mr Tom Darrell was to pay them a visit, we saw John return to his garden work ; but the struggle with himself had been hidden from the sight of man. Only God witnessed it. But Adèle noticed

the results in the white hair, that had been iron-gray, and the deep-furrowed face, that spoke so plainly of suffering undergone. And he had lived so lonely a life since then. The more solitary, that it was peopled with phantoms that never spoke to him, or touched him, but that he could feel always near him, chilling him with a chill of death.

The struggle had ended now, and left a factitious peace behind it, that he easily mistook for the quiescence of a deep calm ; for it was just what he had prayed for, and spent hours of night tossing to achieve—a species of death in which he only lived for his work. But he gradually felt a different life spring up in him again as Adèle's kind voice broke the indifference that had been so hardly acquired. And Adèle noticing it, sat down on the wooden seat, making the old man sit near, and in a strange pitying mood took his toil-hardened hand in hers and smoothed it caressingly as she continued to speak to him. She was so *naïve* and free from false pride

that it never occurred to her how ridiculous it was for her to be so sympathizing to an old gardener in trouble.

God judges these ingenuous natures far otherwise than we do, and knows how deeply they feel, and how simply.

Old John's face slowly cleared, and the dark look of sullen indifference fled away before the loving kindness of Philip's wife. Tears gathered in his eyes; one forced its way down his cheek, and fell, mute witness to the soft emotion he felt, gently on to Adèle's hand.

'You've been very solitary, I'm sure, poor old fellow,' she was saying. 'But you must give this kind of life up, unless you promise me to make up your mind not to forget that you have kind friends, who like to help you.'

'God bless you, ma'am, you're very kind to me,' said John, standing up, and looking very gratefully at Adèle. 'I don't want for anything much. Only—only, it's been so terrible lonely for me these last weeks, and I had such a hard battle.'

‘Let us hope it is over now, John, and that you will not have to fight it again,’ said Adèle.

‘But now to come to business,’ she added in a gayer tone; ‘I want you to come over to look at my garden. I’ve asked Mrs Griffith to spare you for an hour.’

‘You’ve got no strangers staying with you, ma’am, have you?’ asked John, very wistfully.

‘Oh, no!’ cried Adèle, forgetting Tom, or rather not thinking of him as a stranger. ‘There are no strangers at our house.’

This answer seemed to satisfy John, and Adèle and he walked together up the path. Adèle went through the house, but old John turned aside and reached the street by the stable-yard door.

Then he saw Adèle standing by her own gate waiting for him, and he hurried across the road to her, and together they went into the little back garden. Adèle showed him where and how she had planted her bulbs, and John soon busied himself with broom, and

rake, and hoe. Sweeping the gravel-walks into trim tidiness, raking the earth lightly and gently over the crocus and snowdrop beds to send a little light and air down to them, and attacking the insidious weeds that had made a show of dying, the more effectually to hide themselves from mortal ken, only that they might shoot up hardy and bold when the spring time brought its balmy weather and warm rains. He made a wonderful alteration before he had worked for half-an-hour, and the little garden looked bigger and brighter, and as tidy as a thrifty old maid, after his skilful hands had been over it. Here a dead snip of geranium-branch clipped off, there a handful of mould scattered over a hardy rare calceolaria. And the bustle and work, albeit the same as he did every day, made a change in the old man. He was brisker and brighter, and a genial look, like the sun on a frost-nipped apple, came into his face.

Adèle chattered and laughed, and went about after him, pretending to do a vast deal

in the way of helping him, that amused the old fellow hugely. Then she ran into the house and came back again presently with a great glass of amber ale for John the gardener; and obliged him to drink it, and laughed when she saw that instead of the cold stuff he had thought it was, that he had found it was hot and gloriously spiced, and relished it the more accordingly.

When he had finished the trimming up of the garden, there was a little shed of which the door was sadly out of repair, and which Tom Darrell had not mended, because he did not care about working in the cold. So old John set about taking out the screws and refixing the hinges till the door swung backwards and forwards again as it should.

Whilst he was at this, Tom came to the window of the drawing-room, which looked out on the garden, and seeing Adèle with an old man at work, opened the window a little and called to her.

Adèle heard him, but John did not, and

she told the gardener that some one wanted her in the house, so that she would leave him for a while.

‘Whatever are you doing, Adèle, with that old fellow?’ cried Tom, as she entered the room.

‘I’m putting my garden in order, sir,’ said Adèle; ‘and that’s the old gardener at Griffith’s, whom I had not seen for weeks; so I went over and fetched him out of his solitude.’

‘What’s his name?’ asked Tom. ‘And what white hair! It’s splendid.’

‘How odd you are, Tom,’ said Adèle. ‘I only know him as old John. And I think that the poor man has had great sorrows.’

‘Bosh!’ said Tom. ‘Gets tipsy, I dare say.’

‘No, he doesn’t,’ cried Adèle; ‘he’s a very honest old man, and I like him.’

‘That alters the *case*,’ said Tom; ‘if you like him he must be a good fellow indeed.’

Adèle laughed and blushed with pleasure at the implied compliment. They were stand-

ing side by side at the window, looking out into the garden watching John Wright at his work. Suddenly the old fellow paused, turned and glanced round the garden, as if looking for Adèle. Then, as he did not see her in the garden, he raised his eyes to the house. And there at the window, side by side with his kind benefactress, stood Tom Darrell. They saw the old man stagger backward, clutching his hair with both hands; then look again at them, and suddenly fall forward motionless on the ground.

‘I told you he got tipsy,’ said Tom, who on his side did not recognize John Wright, perhaps on account of the latter’s white hair and changed face, that was no more haggard, but calm with a great sadness.

Adèle made no answer to Tom’s remark but ran out to the garden. Tom followed her, and found her supporting the old man and endeavouring to help him to rise. Tom came forward to help, but with a vigorous effort John Wright pushed him aside and got up, standing. Then he staggered away,

and they heard him crying with a desolate cry, 'Oh, my God! my God!' and saw him suddenly steady himself, and firm, erect, and vigorous walk up the garden and leave it.

Tom said nothing, and Adèle was unable to move, for a vague terror was creeping over her. She remembered at that moment that John was just as strange that day she had asked him for a bouquet, and instantly she coupled the name and the sight of Tom Darrell together, and guessed that this man must either fear Tom or hate him. She turned to Tom and asked him—

'Do you know this man, Tom? Oh, tell me if you do!'

'Why, how upset you are, Adèle! I never saw the fellow before in my life,' said Tom. 'But he sha'n't forget me, for I'll tell Mr Griffith of his odd behaviour.'

'No, no; let him alone. Poor wretch! he may be mistaken,' said Adèle.

Then they went back into the house, and Tom begged a game of backgammon.

John Wright returned to his garden, and

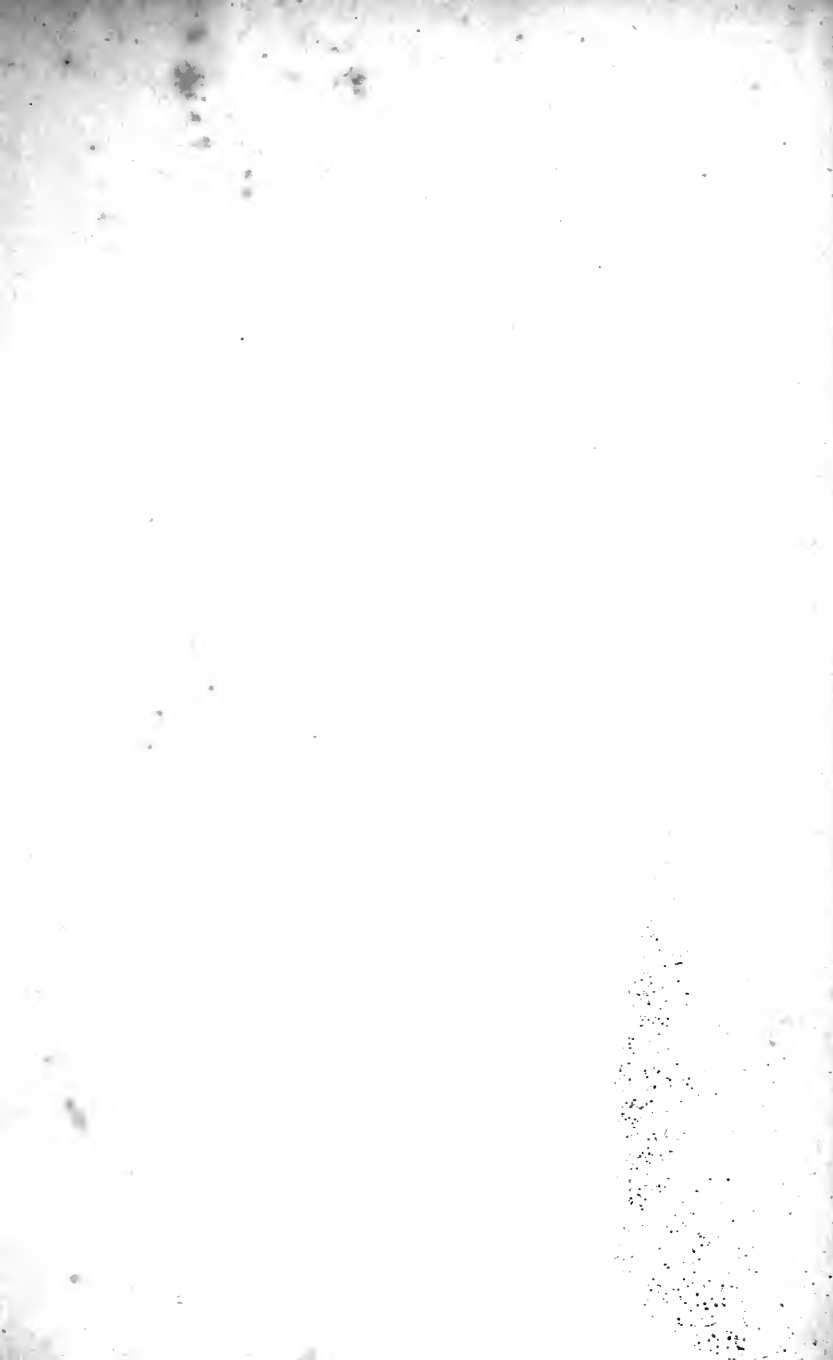
throwing the little door of his house open, strode in and locked it. Then he sank on the ground, all his strength gone, all his calm vanished, and a terrible devil in him, tearing at his soul with red-hot hands. The unhappy wretch had fought against his passions so bravely and so uselessly; he had not conquered them, he had only stilled them with hard work and the solitude of his life. Now they all came back with double power, and tore at him like hungry wolves. He rolled about the floor in utter agony, gasping and muttering with quivering tongue, and he dug his nails into the boards as if he would have torn them up.

His enemy looked so handsome and so happy, and John Wright had caught a look on Adèle's face up-turned to Tom's, that more than anything else filled his heart with fury. He had seen that same look on Katie's face, in Shirley Wood; and it had haunted him in his strenuous fight with the Devil of Revenge that he tried so vainly to beat out of his heart.

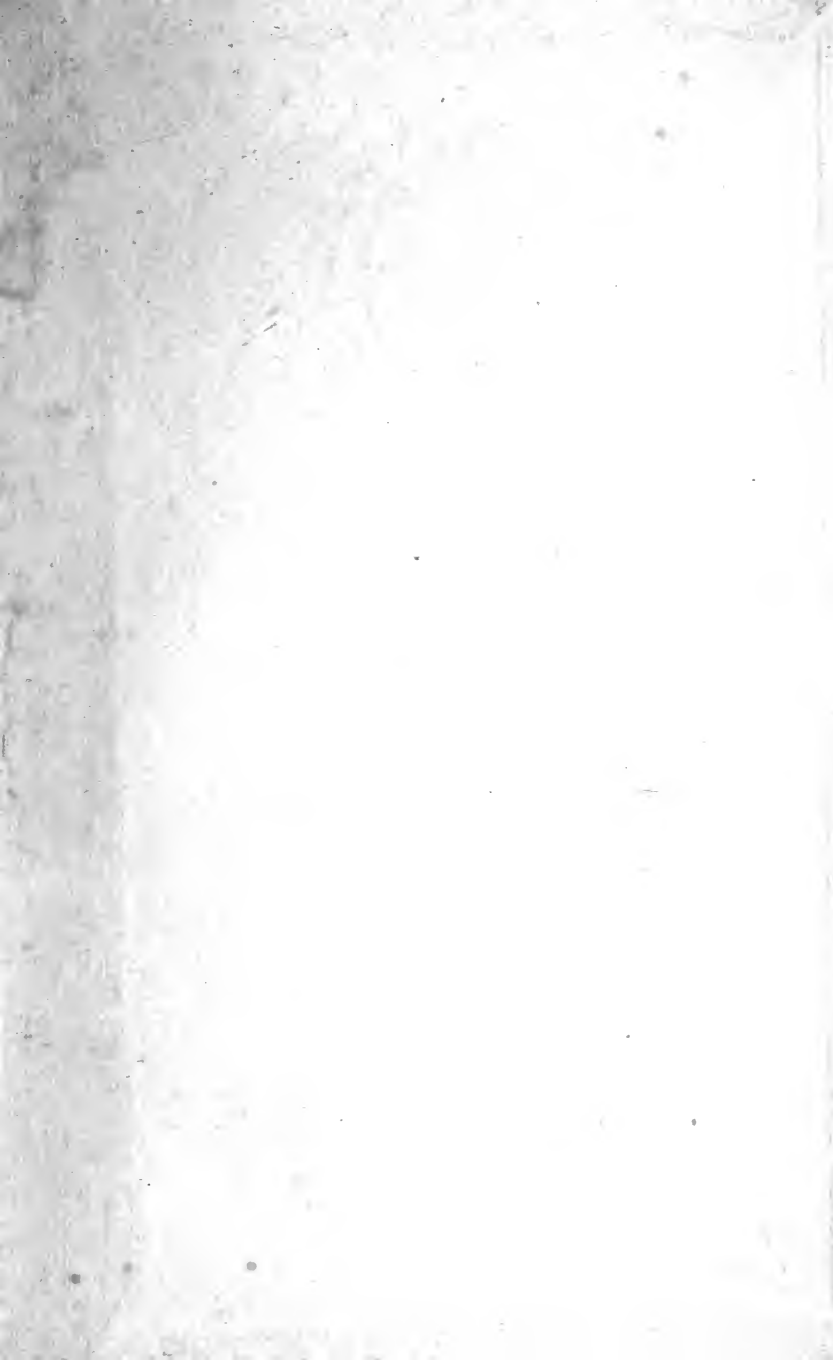
Dusk was over the garden when John Wright came out, panting and gasping for fresh air. But the dusk over the world was as nothing to the black shadow that had thrust itself again over his life, wrapping him in its horrible folds so dank and cold, which were as the pall, all rotted and moist with the damp of the grave, that covered the coffin of his soul.

The shadow will never leave him again, now. Even when all 'power of revenge' has been taken from him by the Almighty justiciary, he will brood over it in his prison. And the more will he brood that his remorse will be for a crime he has never committed.

END OF VOL. II.







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